

# Beyond the Terrors of Performativity: Teachers Developing at the Interface

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# Abstract

Stephen Ball's seminal 2003 paper *The Teacher's Soul and the Terrors of Performativity* perceptively captured changes in educational policy and their effects on the outer and inner lives of teachers. Sixteen years after its publication, Ball's radical, readable critique of accountability structures in schools appears to have a lasting resonance with many postgraduate students, particularly by those completing professional awards whilst also working within schools as teachers, managers and leaders.

In this thesis I acknowledge that there was a need not only for the terminology such as *performativity* and *fabrication* that Ball (re)introduced, but also for his passionate denunciation of accountability measures and the associated paraphernalia of control which appear central to neoliberal models of educational governance. The paper seemed to speak to me directly when I started a professional Masters in Education, helping me to describe the changes I was experiencing in the classroom and the axiological tensions that I was facing. Several years on, it still has a clear resonance for many of the full-time working teachers studying on the professional practice Masters award that I lead today.

In this thesis I move the argument forward, and contend that there is a need not only to reflect on how these changes have been embedded in practice, but also to better describe the way that performativity is experienced by teachers in England. For me, Ball's use of such Foucauldian notions such as "docile bodies" and "subject-position" flatten out teachers, rendering them passive bystanders rather than agentic professionals. This

perspective combined with stark binarisms such as sell your soul to the performative regime or leave the profession altogether did not fit with how I identified as a teacher or the continuum of options that seemed available to me.

Using Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte Jr and Cain's Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds theory, I examine the "Figured Worlds" of education using the voices of three experienced secondary school teachers, and consider how the way that they are positioned within schools affects their professional identities. I also consider how performativity is one of many competing narratives that brush up against each other and explore how teachers "develop at the interface" by choosing how to act and respond and which narratives to prioritise. Through telling their stories, the teachers demonstrate "where along the margins and interstices [they] are able to redirect themselves" through moments where they appropriate, resist or reject performative and other dominant practices and policies. This theoretical lens allows teachers to be seen as heteroglossic agents rather than what Ball terms sufferers of "values schizophrenia", as they attempt to orchestrate the competing voices around them and author themselves in terms that go beyond ethical or enterprising and outstanding or inadequate. These teachers' stories offer a way to explore the inadequacies of binary perspectives in general, and the options available to teachers in particular. This study thus extends our understanding of the different ways that performativity is experienced by teachers as well as the different ways that they can choose to respond.

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# 1 Introduction

In 2003, Stephen Ball published a paper entitled “The Teacher’s Soul and the Terrors of Performativity” (Ball, 2003). In it he described the effects of the introduction of market values into what had hitherto been seen as a values-based, vocational profession. Citing Bernstein, Ball described this as when covenant is replaced by contract (Bernstein, 2000: 89; Ball, 2003: 217).

Educational reform had become a hot topic at the time, with many academics writing about the new expectations of teachers as education policy reform began to introduce accountability measures and market values. This is described as an audit culture (Strathern, 2000) and audit society (M. Power, 1997) or, increasingly after Ball’s papers on this topic, a culture of “performativity” (Ball, 2003; Ball, 2000; Ball and Whitty, 1990). In this thesis I will refer to this as the performative discourse.

Ball’s success in this paper was his use of teachers’ voices, albeit taken from other studies, to show the cultural shift that was taking place within schools, and how teachers felt under pressure to conform to new accountability measures and to perform accordingly.

Specifically, he used the voices of teachers such as “Diane” to describe how a teacher is required to teach in one particular way for an Ofsted inspection, despite believing in a different approach as the most effective (Jeffrey and Woods, 1998: 160 cited in Ball, 2003: 221). This he described as fabrication (Ball, 2003: 224), and he argued that many more fabrications and performative acts were creeping into the role of the teacher, not because

they were seen to be of pedagogic value, but because they were a way of being seen to be doing what others wanted to see. Ball argued that these practices not only changed what a teacher did but also who they were (Ball, 2003: 215), and in doing so illustrated how teachers found themselves conflicted and struggling to adapt to the new way of being a teacher. Ball also compared this conflicted teacher to a new type of teacher “the new hero manager” who did not struggle but, rather, found a way of making a success of themselves in this new culture.

During my career as a teacher I experienced being both of these teachers and my own personal story makes it difficult to see them as binary opposites. This thesis is a response to my own experiences and perceptions of performativity, and it argues that teachers are more complex than Ball describes them. I have found that my reaction to his paper is an emotional and somewhat troubling one, and that my professional and academic identities are tied up in how I have interacted with it in the past and how I continue to react to it. I will discuss these tensions throughout this thesis, showing how they have led to my research questions, choice of theoretical framework, methodology, analysis and conclusions.

## 1.1 Situating Myself in this Study

I began my PGCE in 1998, a year after New Labour had come into power on the premise of an Education, Education, Education Manifesto (Ball, 2013a: 1). My final assignment analysed the “Teachers: Meeting the Challenge of Change” (DfEE, 1998) green paper and what this might mean for new and established teachers. Education was changing, and I was

a new recruit. In my first ever staff meeting as a student teacher, I heard grumbling about attending an upcoming parent's evening until 7pm, and voiced a very unwelcome opinion that lots of people in industry worked until that time as standard. I was told that I did not understand, and I didn't. I didn't understand the marking and planning that would take place that night on top of the parent's evening, or the pressures encountered in the classroom as children became anxious about what their teachers would say to their parents, but more than that I did not understand that I was bringing market values into that meeting. I did not understand that as a child who started school in 1978, I had experienced most of the significant educational reforms as a recipient. My memories included both being given and not being given milk in infant school; I remembered having days off secondary school during the strikes in the 1980s, and I remembered the change in the curriculum so that I could not choose my subject "options" in the way that my elder brother had. We also took different examinations as I sat my GCSEs in 1990. I went to a local school that served the local community, and my parents stayed well away from the school gates, respecting the opinions of the teachers who worked there, unless they were invited in. I started "university" in 1992, having applied to a polytechnic, and I took out some of the first student loans, but I got a free university education. Fees were introduced the year after I left, and though my peers and I discussed how much we disagreed with them, I did not understand how important it was that I should use my student voice, whilst I had it, to help the ones that were to follow.

My entire education had been caught up in reform, and I did not understand what it was like for those to watch from the outside or from the inside, partly because my teachers

shielded me from the way that it affected them, and partly because I was being shaped by it. The same was true for how I became a teacher. I accepted the fast pay rises as teacher salaries were reformed, and I quickly found promotions as middle management became more and more prominent in schools. In fact, I was a part of that change, as I received substantial training to lead Citizenship and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), with a focus on the Every Child Matters agenda and the Healthy Schools Awards.

I accepted every new initiative without question, including the introduction of pupil targets and tracking, as I wished that someone had noticed when my A-level grades started to slide at Sixth Form College. It was only when I had children of my own, and in particular when my eldest started nursery school in 2010, that I started to ask more questions. This was another time of educational reform, and it coincided with my starting a Masters in Education. I was less open to change; I was disheartened to see funding withdrawn from projects that I had worked on, and I saw hard-working students underachieve in their GCSE examinations because the rules had changed mid-course. As the economy and my morale slumped, I started to question what I was doing and who I was doing it for. It was at this time that I first read “The Teacher’s Soul and the Terrors of Performativity” (Ball, 2003).

I did not have a sudden awakening when I first read Ball’s paper, I was still caught up in the system, but it did provide me with a vocabulary to describe my practice. I embraced the terms “performativity” and “fabrication” (Ball, 2003: 215) and started to use them in my assignments as I described “tensions” in my practice. I started to notice the areas where I performed for others, but did not notice my desire to please as I did so. I noticed changing

conversations in the classroom and the staff room, but I did not notice how much I was a part of them. Without realising how much I had embraced the educational reforms that I had been part of so far, I used Ball's words to express how I resisted performativity, and how fabrications allowed me to do so. I am or I was a language teacher, and I took his words and used them as my own, as he had described the feeling of oppression that I felt so well, again without noticing that they had been written during the changes that I had not questioned. I applied "performativity" and "fabrication" to a time when educational reform was delivered without additional funding; when teachers were caught up in a second wave of "discourses of derision" (Ball, 2013a: 82) and where the focus on being consistently Ofsted-ready meant that I had so little autonomy that I could not even decide which colour pen to mark in.

In 2014 I started a doctorate in education and also started to work as an associate lecturer, in addition to working part-time as a teacher. I was straddling different worlds and approaches to education and my stories of teaching surprised my fellow students and new colleagues. Could there really be a senior leader email suggesting that all pupils who forgot their black pens would instead be given "the purple pen of shame" for the lesson? Did I really buy every student I taught a red pen for Christmas so that their books would show that they had responded to my feedback, which I had been obliged to write in green ink?

The Teacher's Soul and the Terrors of Performativity was a paper that became a part of my own writing. It helped me to critically reflect on the fabrications required to quickly audit books or to ask students to pick up their mini whiteboards and pens in order to show whole

class learning as soon as a senior leader or Ofsted inspector walked into the classroom.

What I realised over time, and through reading this paper many times, is that I did not relate to the way that the teacher is theorised in Ball's paper, and that I resisted being described as either the conflicted teacher or the new hero manager.

This thesis then is an exploration of how the performative culture that is described by Ball is experienced by teachers in comprehensive schools. It is written sixteen years after the paper was first published, and at a time that Ball's writing has also changed. Despite this change, the Foucauldian lens that is used in his 2003 paper, and which has influenced over 1,500 papers that cite it (Journal of Education Policy, 2003), is still a lens that is used in Ball's writing about performativity today and one that I find myself resisting. In particular, the image of the teacher as a self-regulating automaton who is limited to a set of binary choices does not fit with the one that I experienced of teachers who made more subtle and personal choices each day. For me, the teacher was more agentic and nuanced than the way that Foucauldian theory was being used to describe them, and this was an area that I wanted to explore in more detail.

In chapter two I look at educational reforms that have led to a culture of performativity in schools, noting how these have impacted on the role of the teacher, the way that this is experienced by the teacher and how it impacts on teachers' professional identities. I do this to contextualise (Goodson, 2008: 4) Ball's paper in 2003, and my reaction to it from 2014 to date.

In chapter three, I argue that using Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain's "Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds" theoretical framework (Holland et al., 2001), offers a way to theorise the teacher as more complex than a "docile body", or the manager as a "technician of behaviour" (Ball, 2003: 221). Commonly referred to as "Figured Worlds", this theory builds on Foucault and Bourdieu, Ball's favoured theorists (Ball, 2010a: 69) and combines concepts of imagination and play from Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and of self-authoring from Bakhtin's literary theory (Bakhtin, 1981; Holland et al., 2001).

In chapter four I explain why I have chosen a narrative approach to collect and analyse data and how I use tools from Figured World's theory to analyse the stories that three comprehensive school teachers have told me. Here, I reframe my research questions and I explain how these tools will help me to locate spaces where teachers develop at the interface of the different discourses that they encounter in their role.

Chapters five, six and seven are the data analysis sections. Here I look at how each individual describes how it feels to be a teacher. It is these rich and complex stories that illustrate the ways that teachers are constantly negotiating their professional identities as they make choices based on the lived day to day experiences of being a teacher. Here, there is scope to portray Stephanie as the conflicted soul, Sarah as the new hero manager and Jasmine as the teacher who decides to leave, according to Ball's paper. Instead, the analysis, using tools from the theoretical framework, shows how these teachers react and interact with the competing discourses that they experience, and the ways that they are compelled to respond through appropriating, resisting and rejecting parts of these



discourses, as they make sense of them. These chapters then, show how these responses create a myriad of ways to act and identify as teachers which are personal and specific to each teacher and the choices that they make and continue to make. This analysis means they cannot meet Ball's profiles as their responses are too complex for a neat fit.

In chapter eight I draw the three analysis sections and the literature from chapter two together to answer my research questions and to argue that teachers are constantly negotiating their professional identities. The way that these teachers are positioned and that they position themselves within their school, their personal histories and their individual values mix with educational discourses so that there are never simple binary options to choose from. It is for this reason that in chapter nine I conclude that the performative discourse is very important to the lived experience of being a teacher, but that rather than only experiencing terrors of the soul, or becoming docile bodies with very limited options, that teachers can and do make choices on how to act within the constraints of the performative discourse, and they create their own new options on how to act accordingly.

This thesis, then, explores the educational reforms that led to the current educational climate. It explores the changing professional identity of the teacher and where spaces can be found for agency within a performative culture. It uses Figured Worlds theory to question and locate if and how the comprehensive, secondary school teacher is faced with more than the options of selling their soul to the terrors of performativity, or of leaving the profession entirely. It does so, with an understanding that whilst I aim to explore the

teacher's ability to create or choose from a continuum that sits between these two binary choices, that I did both during my teaching career. I both embraced and benefitted from educational reform and I have also left the secondary school classroom. It is my experience that teacher choices and their reasons for making them are complex and multi-faceted and the purpose of this study is to explore how and why these take place within a culture of performativity.

## 2 Literature Review

This chapter is an exploration of some of the relevant contextual factors and recent developments in the field of education that have impacted on the role of the teacher. The literature shows how accountability and performativity have become a part of the field of education and how this has affected not only the environment but also the culture in which teachers form their identities. I start by exploring how two of the most significant Education Acts in the twentieth century reflected a political climate, and perhaps were used as a claim that the government was listening and responding. In order to do this, I do not explore the detail of the Acts so much as lay out the ideological differences between them. Later, I discuss these changes in more detail and go on to explore how continued change in educational policy has also impacted on the culture and environment of the school and the teacher. I look not only at how this has led to an increasingly performative environment, but also at how it has impacted on teachers and how they might choose to respond to it.

### 2.1 Education Policy: The shift from Welfare to Market Values

Education policy and Education Acts have had, and continue to have, a great effect on what is taught in schools and the way that schools and teachers are expected to perform. They also define what schools actually are, and who they are meant to serve. Two of the most significant of these Acts are the 1944 Education Act and the 1988 Education Reform Act. This is because they both set out a national approach to Education that reflected a political ideology and a desire to effect dramatic, societal change (Chitty, 2014; Tomlinson, 2005; Ball, 2013a; K. Jones, 2016).

The 1944 Education Act reflected what Chitty describes as a post war general consensus on a number of welfare issues (Chitty, 2014: 30), so that both political front benches shared a similar commitment to full employment and the Welfare state. The 1944 Education Act presented education as a means to employment, and of preparing young people with the “skills and attitudes considered necessary for a working life” (Chitty, 2014: 9). The focus was on access to schools, despite social class, rather than on what was taught (K. Jones, 2016: 13). In fact, the Act did not lay out the curriculum and teaching content of primary and secondary education (Chitty, 2014: 19); rather these decisions were made locally by headteachers and their teachers (Chitty, 2014: 23).

This autonomy over the curriculum is referred to as a golden age for teachers (Whitty, 2000: 283), not least because this implied a trust in them as professionals (Whitty, 2000; Sachs, 2016). Until the introduction of the Education Reform Act (ERA) (Education Reform Act, 1988) the curriculum was referred to as “the secret garden” not to be entered by politicians’ (Chitty, 2005 cited by Kelly, 2009: 189). This was to change significantly with the ERA’s introduction of the National Curriculum, which stipulated four distinct Key Stages for children’s education, the curriculum that should be covered in each stage and national testing in the form of Standardised Assessment Tests (SATs) at the end of each Key Stage, so that pupils and schools could be compared based on these data (Education Reform Act, 1988).

The Education Reform Act marked a significant move from the ideologies of post war Britain, to what Tomlinson (2005: 5) describes as a “post-welfare market society”. This is where the welfare state is replaced with the market state and people are seen as consumers, human resources and human capital rather than human beings (Tomlinson, 2005: 6). Indeed, Jones argues that it destroyed the educational culture that had developed between 1944 and 1979 and “began the work of creating a different one” (K. Jones, 2016: 138) that could compete in a global market (Tomlinson, 2005: 6). This new educational culture would be based on aligning education policies and values with market values, and would have a dramatic impact on the role of the teacher (K. Jones, 2016; Ball, 2013a; Tomlinson, 2005).

Jones argues that the government used newspapers and think tanks to influence the public’s perception of schools and teachers (K. Jones, 2016: 129), and to create an environment where the logic of market values would be readily accepted as the logic for educational policy. The ERA was passed in 1988 following a series of teacher strikes over pay and conditions (K. Jones, 2016: 133) during which the government created a “discourse of derision” (Ball, 2013a: 82) which weakened teachers’ status as trusted professionals (Ball, 2013a: 89; Whitty, 2000: 291; K. Jones, 2016: 134). This came at a cost, not only to the way that the public viewed teachers but also to their professional identity. Research at that time started to investigate the higher than expected rate of teacher attrition and found it to be an “unsettled and unhappy profession” (Mercer and Evans, 1991: 292-293). A later review of literature on teacher attrition found that the perceived decline in teacher status was a factor in teachers choosing to leave the profession (Macdonald, 1999: 839). The role of the

teacher and the way that they were being portrayed was important to the way that they experienced the role and formed their professional identities within it. It is these three themes that I will explore in this literature review, which I will contextualise in terms of educational reform and performativity.

In the next section I will explore how issues related to educational reform are tied into the question of what teacher professionalism actually means, and consequently how they can affect the role of the teacher.

## 2.2 The Changing Role and Professionalism of the Teacher

### 2.2.1 The Role of the Teacher

There is a great deal of rhetoric around what the role of the teacher is and what teachers are expected to do (D. Jones, 1990; K. Jones, 2016; Allen and Sims, 2018; Sahlberg, 2008: 45). Although this review is an exploration of academic literature, it is important to understand how the role of the teacher is defined. Activities that teachers should carry out are given in the school teacher's pay and conditions document (DfE, 2018: 45) which states that teachers should:

- Plan and teach lessons to classes
- Assess monitor, record and report on learning needs and progress
- Prepare pupils for examinations
- Contribute to school policies, practices and procedures
- Work with others
- Cover for absent teachers

- Promote the safety and well-being of students
- Maintain good order and discipline
- Communicate with pupils, parents and carers

(DfE, 2018: 45)

Teachers should also attend an appraisal and take up opportunities for professional development and training (DfE, 2018: 45). They are assessed according to “Teaching standards” (DfE, 2011), which were most recently revised by the Department for Education in 2013 (DfE, 2011: 8). These standards are “the minimum level of practice expected of trainees and teachers” (DfE, 2011: 3) and have been are split into two parts: Teaching and Personal and Professional Conduct. Part one, Teaching, is split into eight sections which stipulate that teachers must:

1. Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils.
2. Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils.
3. Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge.
4. Plan and teach well-structured lessons.
5. Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils.
6. Make accurate and productive use of assessment.
7. Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment.
8. Fulfil wider professional responsibilities.

(DfE, 2011: 10-14).

The role of the teacher and their professionalism are based on these stipulations, and wrapped within them is a duty of care to their pupils, which is referred to as “in parentis locus” (McQueen, 2014: 110-111). Teaching standards are a part of teacher accountability (Sachs, 2001: 149; Povey et al., 2017) as they graphically lay out teacher expectations, and these standards also reflect market values, such as teacher appraisals and monitoring pupil progress. Nevertheless, the concept of the knowledgeable teacher who plans their lessons; manages classroom behaviour; teaches classes of pupils; marks their work, and gives feedback to parents is in keeping with traditional expectations of the teacher (McQueen, 2014: 110-111). What is perhaps missing in these lists are the relational aspects of the role, so that care is presented as safety, rather than based on relationships formed with children over a period of time.

### 2.2.2 Teacher Professionalism

The traditionalist concept of a profession can be described as “having a strong technical culture with a specialised knowledge base and shared standards of practice, a service ethic where there is a commitment to client needs, a monopoly over service, long periods of training, and high degrees of autonomy” (Hargreaves, 2000: 152). In addition to this, Whitty argues that there should also be

*the use of skills based on theoretical knowledge, education and training in those skills certified by examination, a code of professional conduct oriented towards the ‘public good’ and a powerful professional organisation (Whitty, 2000: 281).*



For Whitty, teachers were better described as “semi-professionals” (Whitty, 2000: 281) as they lacked a self-directed professional body. This lack of professional authority and of autonomy in comparison to other professions, such as law and medicine (Whitty, 2000: 283) is important to the way that teachers perceive themselves and are perceived by others. The effects are not only in terms of status (Ball and Goodson, 1985: 2; Allen and Sims, 2018: 120) but also in terms of control, as educational reform is decided from the outside, rather than by teachers themselves.

Put simply, if educational reforms can, as Ball argues, change not only what a teacher does, but who they are (Ball, 2003: 215), it is important to look at what teacher professionalism is, in order to question who makes the decisions that bring about these reforms and how teachers are able to respond.

### 2.3 Hargreaves’ Four Ages of Professionalism

In 2000, Hargreaves described four different ages of teacher professionalism. These are the pre-professional age, the age of the autonomous professional, the age of the collegial professional and the fourth age, which he predicted would be either the post-professional or the postmodern age. Whilst these came about at certain points in history and are therefore context bound, the concept of the teacher as each type of professional is important as it can be used to influence policy, particularly if this is how the policy-writers remember their own experiences of being taught (Hargreaves, 2000: 156).

### 2.3.1 The Pre-Professional Age

This era from the early 1900s to circa the 1960s was a time when teachers were trained in a mentor-apprentice style and they focussed on teaching the collective rather than the individual (Hargreaves, 2000: 154). The pre-professional is a cheap model of teacher: cheap to train and cheap to maintain. Hargreaves states that this model is attractive to policy-makers and “governments who are largely interested in keeping costs down, demeaning teaching and tightly controlling it” (Hargreaves, 2000: 158).

### 2.3.2 The Age of the Autonomous Professional

Dating from the 1960s, this period saw teacher status improve significantly. Pay was improved and it became an almost exclusively “all-graduate profession” (Hargreaves, 2000: 158). It was a time where teachers enjoyed a great deal of professional autonomy and an era of curriculum innovation and freedom (Hargreaves, 2000: 158). This freedom led to some teachers being criticised for teaching “in a box” and dull, homogenous lessons (Hargreaves, 2000: 160). Some were also criticised for reinforcing class structures, and placing themselves “on pedestals above the community” with little understanding of individual student needs (Hargreaves, 2000: 161).

### 2.3.3 The Age of the Collegial Professional

This era took place from the mid-1980s to the writing of the paper in 2000, where teachers needed to respond to an influx of educational reforms by pooling resources and collegiate planning. Hargreaves notes a rapid change in what teachers were expected to teach: the addition of “social work responsibilities” to the task of teaching; inclusion policies; growing

multicultural diversity and an adolescent disengagement. Working together allowed teachers to “marshal resources, conserve energy and sift through a plethora of requirements and demands” (Hargreaves, 2000: 166) which “intensified” their practice (Hargreaves, 2000: 162).

#### 2.3.4 The Fourth Age: post-professional or postmodern professional?

At the point of writing in 2000, Hargreaves could see potential for two very different forms of teacher professionalism. He describes the potential of a widespread, postmodern professionalism that is open, inclusive and democratic that could come about through a conscious, social movement of teachers working with others (Hargreaves, 2000: 167). This he argues is possible if teachers struggle for competitive salaries, persuade politicians and the public of the value of education, and counter the “discourse of derision” (Ball, 2013a: 82) and naming and shaming (Apple, 2005: 15) which undermine the profession. Referring back to traditional, elite criteria of professionalism, he argues for greater respect and collaboration with educational research and a professional self-regulatory body in order to obtain public credibility (Hargreaves, 2000: 168-170). Rather than teachers aiming to re-professionalise themselves in order to reposition themselves on their previous pedestal, Hargreaves argues that working closely with the community and parents in particular is necessary in order to form a collegial professionalism both inside and outside of the school parameters (Hargreaves, 2000: 173).

Despite this optimism and advice, Hargreaves notes the challenges and threats to professionalism, which are not limited to the field of education (Hargreaves, 2000: 168). He

notes the effects of market values on schools and how, “as the most expensive budget item”, teachers have been targeted. This includes a centrally controlled curriculum; intrusive inspection; funding cuts; limiting the level of certification for teacher education and “‘discourses of derision’ that repeatedly hold [teachers] responsible for alleged ills of public or state education” (Hargreaves, 2000: 168). He argues that teachers must react to this de-professionalisation through “active intervention by all educators”, an argument which was also echoed by Sachs (2001).

Hargreaves’ four ages of professionalism prove useful in looking at teacher status, autonomy and workload within their historical contexts and therefore in terms of changes that teachers may experience over the course of their career. It serves as a useful way to contextualise teachers’ professional identities and how they may realign or become conflicted as they experience these changes. It also suggests that any potential for teachers to redefine themselves will be within the context of, and in part based on, their reaction to new and old educational policies and subsequent changes to their role.

## 2.4 Re-Professionalisation

Whitty argues that New Labour’s introduction of the General Teaching Council (GTC) and their plans to make teaching an all-Masters profession was an attempt to align teaching with other, more traditional professions. He claims that theorising practice and creating a professional body was a positive step towards teaching becoming a bona fide profession (Whitty, 2000: 282). Nevertheless, he argues that it is impossible to professionalise teachers whilst at the same time increasing accountability measures, and therefore demonstrating a

lack of trust (Whitty, 2000: 291). It seems that the conflict here is the concept of the teacher as an expert who is highly qualified, and able to regulate her own profession, when a centralised curriculum over which she has no control, accountability measures and targets reposition the teacher as a deliverer of outcomes. Self-regulation as an elite professional means having autonomy over the role of the teacher and the standards to which they are held accountable. This differs greatly from the self-regulation required by teachers who need to meet externally set standards and outcomes, especially if they change according to political ideology rather than professional axiology. The role of the neoliberal teacher requires compliance with measures of outcomes, and a performance of them, in order to make them visible. This is referred to as “box-ticking” (Goodley, 2018: 167) or “jumping through hoops” (Broadfoot and Black, 2004: 20) and is frequently cited by teachers as a negative aspect of the way that they experience their role (Goodley, 2018; Allen and Sims, 2018; Woods et al., 1997; Povey et al., 2017).

## 2.5 The Changing Experience of Being a Teacher

### 2.5.1 Let Our Children Grow Tall – Economic Education Policy

The interrelationship between political ideologies and educational policy (Bell and Stevenson, 2015: 146) is a key factor in educational reform. To understand how teachers experience their role, it is also important to understand the history and context of this role in relation to policies, expectations and the economy.

In the mid 1970s, an economic “second slump” caused the Labour government to agree to cut public expenditure in exchange for an International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan (K. Jones,

2016: 75). This economic crisis, and the need to revisit how public money was spent, led to the Prime Minister James Callaghan's speech at Ruskin College in 1976 (Callaghan, 1976). In it he argued that the post war educational policies were not working, and that new policies should be guided by economic principles, so that pupils would be prepared for the world of work, and schools would be subject to critical scrutiny (K. Jones, 2016: 75; Callaghan, 1976). This was the beginning of "the educational revolution of the 1980s and 1990s attributed to the conservative party" (K. Jones, 2016: 75).

Margaret Thatcher, the subsequent (Conservative) Prime Minister and former Minister for the Department of Education and Science (DES) set out her vision for the future of education (and the country) in 1975 in her "Let our Children Grow Tall" speech in America (Thatcher, 1975). In it she set out her claims that "equality is a mirage" and that we should instead aim for "equality of opportunity". This was based on a premise of ability and hard work and that, like poppies, we should allow "some to grow taller than others if they are able to do so" (Thatcher, 1975). It was this ideology that brought about the ERA (Education Reform Act, 1988) which included a centralised National Curriculum with standardised tests and levels which would allow all pupils to be assessed against each other. The premise was that in removing individual context and teacher professional judgement, children would all be taught and assessed based on a standardised and centrally set curriculum. This curriculum was positioned as providing an opportunity for all, thus allowing for those who could, to grow taller than others (Thatcher, 1975; K. Jones, 2016: 138).

This ideology was linked to a wider economic policy where manufacturing and manual work were no longer classed as profitable. Faith was being placed in a knowledge-based economy (Thatcher, 1975), that is, a means to create wealth which is knowledge based rather than physically based (Leadbeater, 2000 cited by Ball, 2013a: 23). This knowledge economy required a change in approach, so that schools needed to produce Homos Econominus (Ong, 2006: 501) rather than factory workers, and was “translated into and articulated through national education policies” (Ball, 2013a: 25). Importantly, the change had a major impact not only on what teachers were expected to do, but also the way that they experienced their role (Kelly, 2009: 211). The issues that arose from removing not only teacher autonomy, but also ensuring that their work could be assessed according to high stakes tests, was exacerbated by the introduction of the new inspectorate, the Office of Standards in Education (Ofsted) which “threatened school closures, the firing of teachers and public humiliation” if they classed schools as “failing” (Kelly, 2009: 47).

Woods et al. note that the introduction of the ERA brought about “role tension” for teachers (Woods et al., 1997: xi) which involved strong emotions and conflict within the inner self. Helsby and McCulloch state that this impacted on teachers’ professional confidence and consequently their ability to maintain control of their working lives (Helsby and McCulloch, 1996: 61). Woods et al. argue that, particularly after the introduction of Ofsted inspections, teachers were faced with a choice of avoiding negative trauma, by “shifting identity and status from professional to technician” (Woods et al., 1997: xii), but that this was met with reluctance. This inner conflict and negative trauma can lead to burn out and stress, which they note increased dramatically from the year that the ERA was

introduced (Woods et al., 1997). Helsby and McCulloch note that the “plethora of new initiatives” at this time led to “severe pressure upon teachers’ time” and, due to a lack of time and training given for implementation, teachers felt that they were “always underdeveloped and unsatisfactory” (Helsby and McCulloch, 1996: 65). Workload and change in teacher roles and responsibilities were impacting on how teachers were experiencing being a teacher and their confidence in their role as they learnt to survive in an audit culture.

### 2.5.2 Audit Cultures

Michael Power states that during the late 1980s and early 1990s there was an explosion of the idea of the audit and that it became “central to a certain style of controlling individuals ... which permeated organisational life” (M. Power, 1997: 4). The reasoning that “accountability and account giving are part of what it means to be a rational individual” (Douglas, 1992: 132) and the adoption of accountability measures on a national and global scale meant that the introduction of audit measures in the public sector was put forward as a logical step where both economic efficiency and good practice were being pursued (Strathern, 2000: 2).

### 2.5.3 Education, Education, Education

In 1996, Tony Blair, the then leader of the opposition, made a speech at Ruskin College, Oxford, to mark the twentieth anniversary of Callaghan’s Ruskin College speech. In it he argued that “economic success and social cohesion” would depend on education policy and reaffirmed that the three priorities for the labour government would be “education,



education and education” (Blair, 1996). When New Labour came into power six months later, they kept their promise to focus on education and the knowledge economy. There was also a focus on greater accessibility which Blair described as “moving from a commitment to the excellence of the few, to support for the talents of the many” (Blair, 1996).

New Labour described “A Third Way” to approach government, which would create “a modernised social democracy, passionate about its commitment to social justice and the goals of the centre-left” (Blair, 1998). They would not take policies solely from the “old left” or the “new right”, but they would find a “third way” that built on what was most effective from both sides, melding together elements of their respective reform programmes (S. Power and Whitty, 1999: 541). One aspect of this was increasing public spending on education (Tomlinson, 2005: 128) and on improving teachers’ salaries (Lupton and Obolenskaya, 2013; Ball, 2013a: 161), but this came at a cost for teachers in terms of their workload.

New Labour’s policies aimed to create a new education system fit for the new millennium and one in which Britain could compete globally (Chitty, 2014: 69-72). This was described by David Blunkett as “investing in human capital in an age of knowledge, to compete in the global economy” (DfEE, 1997: 3). For the teacher, this meant an increased workload through direct intervention in not only what was taught, but also how it was taught. New initiatives were monitored through high stakes testing, published in school league tables (S. Power and Whitty, 1999) and new targets were set accordingly. For example, the literacy

and numeracy hours in primary schools were not only prescriptive, but they were also assessed according to published SATs results, and national targets, based on growth, were set with each new success in this area (Chitty, 2014: 69-72). Teachers were also expected to implement social policy initiatives, such as the Every Child Matters Agenda (DfEE, 2003).

One aspect of making the British Educational system more competitive globally was to identify and follow good practice in the most highly performing schools systems in the world (Thomas, 2016: 220). This included setting up the General Council for Teaching (GTC) and the National College for School Leadership and an attempt to make teaching an M level profession (Thomas, 2016: 219). An aim to improve the status of teachers included performance-related pay for teachers who could “cross the threshold” if they demonstrated meeting specific targets and then advance through an upper pay scale (DfEE, 1998: 31).

## 2.6 The Teacher’s Soul and the Terrors of Performativity

The ideological move away from a welfare state to a neoliberal one had a great impact on how teachers were experiencing their role, and whether or not they wished to continue in it. Teacher burn out and attrition had increased dramatically since the introduction of market values in the school (Kyriacou, 1987; Kyriacou, 2001). The New Labour government attempted to address this through higher professional status and pay, but in a low trust environment (Whitty, 2000: 291). This re-professionalisation created a perfect storm, which Stephen Ball captured in his 2003 seminal paper “The Teacher’s Soul and the Terrors of Performativity” (Ball, 2003). The paper draws upon concepts by Lyotard and Foucault to describe how educational policy reform had resulted in changing “not only what people, as

educators do, but also who they are” (Ball, 2003: 215). Ball details how “three interrelated policy technologies: the market, managerialism and performativity” aligned the public and private sectors, resulting in a commodification of core public services, placing particular emphasis on schools and the inner conflict that teachers felt in relation to this (Ball, 2003: 216).

This paper was important on a number of levels: It discussed educational reform in terms of the market, and the managers who enforce accountability measures and it theorised the teacher using a Foucauldian lens, removing their agency and instead presenting them as either docile bodies or technicians of behaviour. In doing so, Ball created a picture of the school environment and the way that the role of the teacher was changing from that of an autonomous, caring professional to a technician who is governed by the performative discourse. One important aspect of this was taking Lyotard’s term “performativity (Lyotard, 1984: 51) and using it to describe the role and tensions of the teacher.

Ball defines performativity as “a new mode of state regulation which makes it possible to govern in an ‘advanced liberal’ way”. He refers to a shift in public sector teachers from “the collective” (Ball, 2003: 219) to “individuals” who are required “to organise themselves as a response to targets, indicators and evaluations”. This shift requires them to “set aside personal beliefs and commitments and live in an existence of calculation” (Ball, 2003: 223). Ball warns that a teacher cannot maintain ethical integrity and conform to accountability measures (Ball, 2003: 216) and creates a story of the conflicted teacher who pertains to traditional (welfare) values and struggles in a performative culture.

### 2.6.1 Fabrications

One way that Ball suggests that schools and teachers create a way to visibly conform and succeed is through what he refers to as “fabrications” or “creative compliance” (Ball, 2003: 225). He argues that in order to be audited there is a need to transform yourself into an “auditable commodity” (Shore and Wright 1990: 570 cited on page 225) and that fabrications allow teachers to present themselves in ways that results in positive audit results.

Ball argues that “fabrications conceal as much as they reveal. They are ways of presenting oneself within particular registers of meaning, within a particular economy of meaning in which only certain meanings have value” (Ball, 2003: 225). That is, the teacher learns the value of the Ofsted term “Outstanding” and finds ways to show or perform this to those that assess them. Ball argues that “fabrications are deeply paradoxical” as they are “in one sense a way of eluding or directing direct surveillance” but in another sense “the work of fabrication requires submission to the rigours of performativity” (Ball, 2003: 215). He uses the example of Diane who “plays the game” in an Ofsted inspection, despite her reservations and the “cost to the self” (Jeffrey and Woods, 1998: 160; Ball, 2003: 222). Ball argues that “the teacher that is inspected here is not Diane, it is someone that Diane knows that the Inspectors want to see and the sort of teacher that is hailed and rewarded by educational reform” (Ball, 2003: 222).

Ball states that “acts of fabrications and the fabrications themselves become embedded in and are reproduced by systems of recording and reporting on practice” (Ball, 2003: 225) which “render the organization into a recognisable rationality which is underpinned by ‘robust procedures’, punctuated by ‘best practice’ and always ‘improving’, always looking for ‘what works’” (Ball, 2003: 225). This he argues impacts on the teacher, creating two binary opposites: the “new hero” manager who makes a success of themselves and monitors others (Ball, 2003: 219), and the conflicted teacher who is forced to play the game, despite the inner tensions this creates (Ball, 2003: 222).

#### 2.6.2 Performativity

The need to be classed as successful according to a new set of values and the audit processes requires a loss of autonomy as the new narrative “determines in a single stroke what one must say in order to be heard, what one must listen to in order to speak, and what role one must play” (Lyotard, 1984: 21). This is important to the way that teachers are represented as well as the meaning attached to Ball’s term performativity. Lyotard’s premise of performativity is that of a game, which he likens to chess. He describes “active” players who understand the game and its rules and who are tied together within the context of society’s grand, meta and little narratives which he calls social bonds (Lyotard, 1984: 60). These players learn how to present themselves to others using the terms and values, or what he calls, “criteria of competence” (Lyotard, 1984: 20) that are necessary to be seen in a positive light. However, “terror” occurs when the playfulness of the game is removed and is instead “based entirely on the threat to eliminate the opposing player” (Lyotard, 1984: 64).

The terrors of performativity, which Ball describes, are directly linked to Lyotard's warning that "whenever efficiency (that is obtaining the desired effect) is derived from a 'say or do this or else you'll never speak again,' then we are in the realm of terror and the social bond is destroyed" (Lyotard, 1984: 64)". In writing about performativity from the assumed broken social bond, the teacher is no longer portrayed as an active participant who uses their knowledge of the game to make considered moves. The teacher's soul is not only conflicted, but their actions are constricted, and their performance is audited so that, even when fabricating, they are forced to regulate their behaviour toward performative outcomes or to consider a different career (Ball, 2003: 216).

### 2.6.3 The New hero manager

Not all teachers struggle in the performative environment, and Ball is critical of those who accept the audit culture and find a way to thrive within it. He describes the manager as "the new hero of educational reform" (Ball, 2003: 219) and argues that these new teachers are not only "beneficiaries of reform" (Ball, 2003: 219) but also "technicians of behaviour" whose task it is to "produce bodies that are docile and capable" (Foucault, 1977: 294; Ball, 2003: 219). This is in keeping with Ball's criticism of managerialism as part of the package of educational reform, and also in keeping with his use of a Foucauldian lens to theorise not only the experience of the teacher, but also what it means to be a teacher. This has had far reaching implications for the way that teachers are portrayed and theorised in academic literature (Ball, 1990; Perryman, 2006; Clarke and Matthew, 2013; Webb et al., 2009).

#### 2.6.4 Panoptic Performativity

The performative culture in schools has been described as “a modern, all-purpose equivalent of Bentham’s panopticon” (Ball, 1990: 156), which Foucault interpreted as “a generalisable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men” (Foucault, 1977: 205). The panopticon was designed as a prison, but Bentham argued that its design was so versatile that could be used in any institution to achieve inspection “perfection” (Bentham, 2008 initially 1787: 1). Foucault argued that “the major effect of the Panopticon [is] to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault, 1977: 201). Therefore the “object” of inspection, would always be aware of the inspector, and would learn to self-regulate as they can never be certain of when or if they are being observed. The concept of the panopticon is used widely in the field of Education to describe performativity as a form of self-regulation where the teacher is portrayed as victim to “the gaze” (Foucault, 1977:217). This comes not only from those that inspect them, but also from themselves (McKenzie, 2001; Ball, 2010b; Perryman, 2006; Webb et al., 2009).

The description of the teacher inside the panopticon offers a way to visualise the sense of always being observed within a performative culture, and the pressures that come with this. The image created is not one of individuals who are autonomous or agentic, but of “docile bodies” (Foucault, 1977: 135) who are aware of the gaze and trying to be seen at all times as behaving in the way that the observer would judge as acceptable. Ball notes that this is problematic for teachers, who are not only being asked to opt into this system, but also to regulate themselves and understand themselves through it (Ball, 2003: 221). This means

that the “gaze” on the teacher has not only an effect on their practice, but also on their professional identity.

For many, the gaze is described in terms of Ofsted, the inspectorate which “police” schools and teachers (Woods et al., 1997: 118). This is described by Lucy in a recent study by Allen and Sims, who states that “everything has to look just right without regard for what is happening to the children on a day-to-day basis” (Allen and Sims, 2018: 93). For Lucy, her work has become orientated around pleasing the “gaze” but, as Bentham described, the inspector can be anyone who happens to look in. Nevertheless, the power of the Ofsted gaze is evident, and Perryman directly links the panopticon to Ofsted inspections in what she terms “panoptic performativity” (2006: 155). She describes this as:

*The experience of an inspection regime in that teachers and pupils feel as if they are constantly being observed, and perform accordingly in order to escape the regime. The discourse of Ofsted and school effectiveness must be accepted in order for normalisation to be accomplished, and only when normalisation is achieved can the escape from the panopticon be accomplished (Perryman, 2006: 155-156).*

For Perryman, regular inspections create “a sense of constant surveillance” where the “gaze” (2006: 155) comes from Ofsted inspectors or Her Majesty’s Inspectorate (HMI). When the experience of the teacher is theorized using the concept of panoptic performativity and a Foucauldian lens, it pulls the teacher away from Lyotard’s description of a person jousting with others with whom they have a social bond through language games, and instead moves it towards Lyotard’s concept of terror, used in the title of Ball’s



paper, where the teacher is at risk of being silenced or forced to consent (Lyotard, 1984: 64).

Educational reform since 1944 has seen a great change in what it means to be a teacher, both in terms of being a professional, and also in terms of what is expected in the day to day tasks of the role, as well as in terms of adapting to change. The argument that teachers are audited to such an extent that they begin to self-regulate and to accept and reproduce the new discourse can fit with the Foucauldian way of describing the teacher. This, however, removes the concept of teachers having an individual professional identity, which they negotiate themselves, and also implies that teachers have no agency.

## 2.7 Plus Ça Change...

Educational reform took another turn in 2010 when the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government came into power following the global financial crisis two years earlier. Michael Gove's "What is education for?" speech in 2009 set out his plan to drive "rapid improvement in educational standards" (Gove, 2009). In this speech he laid his ambitions for "poor" children to be given their rights to an intellectual inheritance through returning to a traditional curriculum that would meet access requirements to Russell group universities. To do so, he argued for schools to acquire "academy freedoms ... free from bureaucratic control" (Gove, 2009) whilst giving them the freedoms to teach as if they were in the private sector.

Academies are overseen and funded directly by the government and are still inspected by Ofsted. They do not have to follow the national curriculum, can set their own pay and conditions, and can manage their own admissions policies (Eyles et al., 2017: 109). This has drastically changed the landscape of what education looks like, as in June 2019, 72.3% of secondary pupils attended academies or free schools (Roberts and Danechi, 2019). Those academies who have received an outstanding grade before or after they convert can become “exempt” from Ofsted inspections (Roberts and Danechi, 2019) so that teachers and schools who are classed as in a “strong market” (Ball, 2003: 225) can find themselves “free” to regulate themselves, so long as their grades remain high. Those in the “weak market” (Ball, 2003: 225) however, have increased pressures as these “freedoms” (Gove, 2009) were offered at the same time as curriculum and assessment reforms were introduced to arguably increase “rigour” and return to a “traditional approach to education” (Gove, 2009). For secondary school teachers, this included the introduction of the English Baccalaureate, where schools were assessed on their performance in English, Mathematics, a Modern or Ancient Language, a Humanities subject (but not Religious Studies) and the Sciences; a cap on the number of students attaining the highest grades at GCSE (K. Jones, 2016: 199) and a move from GCSE grades to a numbers scale (Ofqual, 2018).

Allen and Sims claim that the “gaze” has intensified, as has workload, since 2012, when Ofsted’s forewarned, long inspections with large teams were replaced with short notice, smaller and shorter inspections (Allen and Sims, 2018: 94). This created a need for school managers and leaders to consistently monitor and audit themselves and others, so that they can be ready for an Ofsted inspection at any time (Allen and Sims, 2018: 94). Allen and Sims

argue that this had led to leaders auditing teachers more closely, looking at weekly planning, setting rigid marking schemes, performing weekly book moderation and collecting regular pupil tracking data (Allen and Sims, 2018: 96). Perryman et al. describe these changes as a “post-panoptic perpetual readiness for inspection” (Perryman et al., 2018: 161).

The experience of the teacher is not only related to educational reform and work intensification in order to perform at all times, but also the increase of workload as each new initiative is introduced. In the final section of this literature review I will explore if and how teachers can choose to respond to the performative culture and whether or not this could affect their professional identity.

## 2.8 Making Sense of Being a Teacher – Identities and Agency

### 2.8.1 Dichotomies

So far in this literature review I have explored what it means to be a teacher in terms of how teachers’ roles and experiences have changed as performative and accountability measures have been introduced through educational reform. I would now like to turn to Ball’s comment that performativity not only changes what teachers do, but who they are (Ball, 2003: 215). This implies that the performative discourse directly impacts on teacher professional identity. In this section, I will explore teacher identity, looking in particular at how teachers form their professional identities in relation to the performative discourse and educational reform.

Tied within the teacher professionalism debate is the question of whether or not teachers are autonomous, and whether or not they have agency (Whitty, 2000; Sachs, 2001; Hargreaves, 2000). This question of agency also occurs to me when teachers are described as docile bodies who are normalised and governed through accountability measures (Ball, 2003: 221). Hargreaves predicted a possibility of a new age for teacher professionalism which would be either that of the postmodern or post-professional teacher (Hargreaves, 2000: 156). In its most simplistic terms, the postmodern teacher would have agency, and the post professional would not.

Keddie argues that dichotomies in the literature on teacher professionalism have been created which are not helpful as they “fail to acknowledge the overlap and complexity of teacher professionalism” (Keddie, 2017: 1247). Further to this, she argues that, in the extant literature, one type of professionalism is favoured over the other, so that “traditional professionalism is idealised over entrepreneurial professionalism” (Keddie, 2017: 1246). Ball’s “Teacher’s Soul” paper is a good example of this as he describes the conflicted teacher, who has retained traditional professional values over the new hero manager, or the entrepreneurial, triumphant self, who benefits from the new performative discourse (Ball, 2003: 219). This is presented using Foucauldian theory, which suggests that both types of teacher become governed by the performative discourse. In doing so, the conflicted teacher becomes a docile body who fabricates for others, despite what they believe they ought to be doing and the new hero manager becomes a technician of behaviour and makes a success of herself by auditing others. Both types of teachers submit to the performative discourse, but one benefits from it and the other struggles with it.

Sachs does not write about identity as being dichotomous, but she did in 2001 describe two different forms of professionalisms that led to two different types of teacher professional identity. Sachs positions a managerialist professionalism that results in an entrepreneurial identity against a democratic professionalism which results in an activist identity (Sachs, 2001: 149). Whilst there is still an idealism associated with the democratic, activist teacher, what is important in Sachs' paper is that she asserts that teacher's professional identities are not fixed, and that teachers can inhabit multiple professional identities, including both the activist and entrepreneurial, at different times.

Sachs argues that educational discourses offer "particular kinds of subject positions and identities through which people come to view their relationships with different loci of power" (Sachs, 2001: 151) but that these must forever be re-established and renegotiated, particularly when there are paradoxes within the discourses. Three paradoxes that she identified in 2001 were a call for teacher professionalism at a time when teachers were being de-skilled; teachers being told to be autonomous whilst under increasing pressure to be more accountable and that rethinking teaching practice was demanding but fewer resources were being allocated to support and train experienced teachers (Sachs, 2001: 150). Rather than presenting two dichotomous identities, then, Sachs advocates teachers choosing to author their own professional identities and professional narrative (Sachs, 2001: 160), so that the activist identity is one where teacher's make active choices about who they are and who they want to be in relation to the competing discourses and contradictions that they face.

Based on Keddie's premise that discussing professionalism in terms of dichotomies is unhelpful, and if as Sachs suggests, teacher identity and teacher professional discourses are related and negotiated (Sachs, 2001: 154) then the overlap and complexity of teacher professionalism and identity become even more important. Keddie argues that "different, seemingly oppositional, forms of professionalism can co-exist" and that "entrepreneurial professionalism does not necessarily undermine a focus on students and does not necessarily compromise teacher autonomy and criticality" (Keddie, 2017: 1247). If seemingly oppositional discourses can co-exist not only within the school, but also within the teacher, then how does this affect the teacher's professional identity?

## 2.8.2 Teacher Identity and Meaning Making

Sachs argues that in times of rapid change "identity cannot be seen as a fixed 'thing'" and that it is negotiated and based on everyday situations (Sachs, 2001: 154). She states that:

*For teachers this is mediated by their own experience in schools and outside of schools as well as their own beliefs and values about what it means to be a teacher and the type of teacher they aspire to be (Sachs, 2001: 154).*

If this is the case, then perhaps the teachers that Ball cites in his 2003 paper were not just talking about their changing experiences of being a teacher, but were also exploring how it fitted with their own belief systems as they negotiated their everyday experiences of being a teacher at a time of change. This impacts on the way that Ball's paper can be understood, as it leads to questions on what teachers decide to do as they negotiate these changes and

what this means for their teacher professional identities. Rather than allocating subject-positions of the conflicted teacher or the new hero manager, the questions shifts from, “so what becomes of them?”, to “what will they choose to become?”.

Towers and Maguire’s research argues that teacher identity is the basis of meaning making and decision making and that:

*Their identities are made up of a combination of aspects from their personal and professional selves that are continually constructed and reconstructed in response to a variety of ever-changing influences (Towers and Maguire, 2017: 949).*

Sachs’ and Towers and Maguire’s approaches to teacher identity, combine the personal with the professional so that professional identities are formed through mediating and combining more than the experience in the workplace, and more than the present. Teacher identity is also about who they imagine(d) themselves to be as a teacher and how this aspiration fits within the discourse of what a good teacher is, particularly in times of change.

Perryman and Calvert’s study into what motivates teachers to teach and why they choose to leave, gives some insight into how teachers position their aspirational teacher self within the performative discourse. In a longitudinal study of teachers from their initial teacher training over five years, their data show that:

*The reasons cited for becoming a teacher seem largely altruistic – wanting to “make a difference”, wanting to work with young people and love of their subject. The reasons for leaving or for thinking of leaving were workload and work/life balance as well as target driven culture and government initiatives (Perryman and Calvert, 2019: 2).*

This study describes the joy that teachers seem to gain from teaching, from their pupils and their colleagues (Perryman and Calvert, 2019: 11) even when they are considering leaving. Both Perryman and Calvert's and Towers and Maguire's studies, show that even at the point of leaving, teaching can still be rewarding and seem to counter Bernstein's prediction that in a performative environment "contract replaces covenant" (Bernstein, 2000: 89). Rather than dichotomies and terrors, Perryman and Calvert describe a "a discourse of disappointment" (Perryman and Calvert, 2019: 16) where accountability measures and a low trust environment restrict the teacher from becoming the one that they had hoped to be. Furthermore, as 75% cite work-life balance as a reason to leave, these issues also impact on the person who they aspire to be in their personal life.

### 2.8.3 Teacher Agency

Woods et al. note that "interactionism" is a way to understand how educational reform is experienced by teachers and that they needed to engage with the changes, rather than simply being taken over by them. Woods et al. argue for a need to "redefine teachers in more positive ways" (Woods et al., 1997: xiii), one of these ways being to consider if teachers can have agency, even if this is to choose how they respond to enforced change.

Priestley, Biesta and Robinson define teacher agency as "agency that occurs specifically in the professional working practices of teachers" (Priestley et al., 2015: 20). Building upon the work of Emirbayer and Mische, they argue that there are three dimensions to teacher agency, which are the past (the iterative dimension); the future (the projective dimension)



and the present (the practical evaluative dimension) (Priestley et al., 2015: 17; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 962). Priestley et al. argue that teachers bring their life and professional histories as well as their short and long term aspirations to the environment in which they work. Their roles and relationships, the resources available to them, their values and beliefs and the discourses in this working environment affect their capacity for agency so that “it is the interaction between capacities and conditions that count in making sense of teacher agency” (Priestley et al., 2015: 3). Referring directly to performativity, they argue that even when teachers and schools are offered autonomy to make decisions, the high level of accountability measures in place limits teachers’ capacity for agency, or at least the agency to act differently (Priestley et al., 2015: 111). Citing Eisner, they liken the teacher experiencing performativity to a caged bird: “If a bird has been in a cage for a decade and suddenly finds the door open, it should not be surprising if the bird does not wish to leave” (Eisner, 1992: 617; Priestley et al., 2015: 126).

#### 2.8.4 Counter Agency

Lyotard’s concept of terror could be seen to fit well with the concept that teacher agency has become limited, and with Ball’s argument that performativity changes who teachers are, to the extent that when offered opportunities to act agentically they will not. As Ball stated, the teacher who feels that she is not trusted and who is in a “weak market” might not feel able make choices that do not fit into the performative discourse. This does not mean however that teachers cannot subvert or oppose policy (Priestley et al., 2015: 27). Prior argues that the public service worker, such as the teacher, brings their own agency to the “moment” of policy delivery, using their “individual, context-specific and emotionally

and morally charged assessment” (Prior, 2009: 22). This can lead to “counter agency” (Prior, 2009: 29) where teachers and pupils act in ways which are different to the ways that policy intended. He describes three different types of agency which are revision, resistance and refusal. Revision is where actions are revised in order to produce the required outcomes and refusal is when one refuses to become engaged. Resistance is described as an active form of agency and Prior’s example is how prisoners seemingly accept their “subject roles constructed for them while developing covert personal strategies for survival and eventual release” (Prior, 2009: 31). This description links very well to Perryman’s assertion that for teachers it is “only when normalisation is achieved can the escape from the panopticon be achieved” (Perryman, 2006: 155-156). Counter agency can mean the appearance of conforming, but for a limited period of time, or a way to hide how teachers revise or reject policy. Staying in the cage does not necessarily mean choosing to be a prisoner, and appearing to conform does not necessarily mean conformity.

The blurring of dichotomies means that the teacher who decides to leave or stay in teaching does not necessarily lose their aspirations to be the teacher that they hoped to be, but rather that they start to form their identities within the environment that they are in. They may embrace the cage, or find comfort in its familiarity, but they may also find ways to see it differently and therefore to react to it differently. Teacher identity and agency are weaved with and into the performative discourse. Therefore, if teachers’ professional identities and their ability to make choices are made with a lived experience of this discourse, then they can respond to it on an individual and personal level, making revisions here, rejections there and resisting certain elements whilst also embracing others.

## 2.9 Post professionalism and Postmodern Professionalism?

The changes to the educational system, and in particular the professed new freedoms that school have been given, mean that whilst insisting on academic rigour, teachers who work in academies no longer need to have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) (Roberts and Danechi, 2019: 23). There are then, moves that seem contradictory, and that show that teachers are becoming both post-professional, and postmodern.

What Hargreaves may not have been able to imagine, when predicting his fourth age of teacher professionalism (Hargreaves, 2000: 156) was that teachers would find a social media platform so that they can communicate with each other away from the gaze of the school. One example of this is ResearchED, a grassroots research orientated group for teachers and educators which started on Twitter and now holds teaching conferences around the globe (Allen and Sims, 2018). Twitter is used as a way for teachers to communicate in an open, inclusive and democratic space to share ideas and support each other, and it has also provided a space for teachers to consider how the profession could be. In Australia and England local teachers and educators, including academics have written several books entitled “Flip the System” which aim to help teachers “to acquire individual agency and assert it, by acting collectively” (Stevenson, 2018: 90). Hargreaves writing in the British version of this book, discusses how we have now entered the age of “identity, engagement and well-being” and that there is a need to respond to the “global epidemic of mental health problems among young people” (Hargreaves, 2018: 164). He argues that we need to flip the system back to a place where children are placed in the centre of “a human

system of learning, development and care” and that there is a need to also address teacher well-being and work-life balance (Hargreaves, 2018: 167).

This change in mood and tone, reflective of the time that has passed and the educational reforms that have taken place over the last two decades, is also shown in more recent work by Ball. In recent years he has written about his interest in Foucault’s later writing and notes that this offers a way to consider how we might “subvert the new games of truth within which we are re-worked” and that “spaces remain in which we might invent or contrive new ways of saying the truth” (Ball, 2013b: 142). Ball argues that the reading of Foucault in Education Studies stresses the “impossibility of freeing oneself from power relations” but that in Foucault’s later work “subjectivity, ethics, resistance and freedom are interwoven in complex and multi-layered ways” so that we constantly interrupt ourselves to understand the way that we are governed in order to be able to act differently (Ball, 2013b: 146). This he argues can be done through the “re-writing of the self” as “the process of resistance and liberation are in part, in the modern context, processes of knowing and caring for the self”.

There is something very interesting in reading “later Ball’s” description of how he is starting to see governmentality and regimes of truth differently through reading “later Foucault”. It raises questions about how Ball’s work on performativity could be considered differently, and opens research questions around how the teacher might be able to find spaces to rewrite the self.

In particular, this review of the literature has led to the following research questions:

- How does the teacher describe their lived experience of working in the secondary school sixteen years after *The Teacher's Soul and the Terrors of Performativity* was published?
- Are there spaces within the performative discourse for a teacher to be the type of teacher that they aspire to be?
- Can using a theoretical lens that focuses on identity and agency and “re-writing the self” add a new dimension to the current literature that discusses the effects of performativity on the teacher?

In the next chapter, I will explore the theoretical framework through which I attempt to answer these questions.

# 3 Theoretical Framework

In the previous chapters I have reviewed some of the pertinent literature which has led to three research questions. In particular I have explored the literature that describes the changing role, experience and identity of the teacher in an increasingly performative culture. To do so I have referred to “The Teacher’s Soul and the Terrors of Performativity” (Ball, 2003) in detail, to present some of the terminology that I am using in this thesis, but also to problematise the way that teacher agency is presented in that paper compared to the way that I had experienced it. In this chapter, I will consider why Ball’s paper had such an impact on me; how it has led to my writing this thesis; how it led to the use of Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds as a theoretical framework and the methodological implications of this choice.

## 3.1 Why Ball?

When I first read Ball’s paper on performativity, it resonated. I was working part-time as a teacher and writing an essay for a Masters in Education award. For the first time, I stopped to consider the way that I was working and the way that I was being asked to work. It was also around that time that I received my first low grade in a quality assurance assessment. A fifteen-year-old pupil, who I will call Lee, had been interviewed by an assistant headteacher and when asked, claimed he did not know his GCSE target grade. According to the assessment grid this meant that I was not doing my job properly. What did not make sense to me at the time was that we discussed target grades often in our lessons, and I agreed them individually with each pupil. When I asked Lee if he knew his target grade, he

promptly told me what it was. I was exasperated. When I asked him why he hadn't shared it with the Assistant Head, he told me that he had felt embarrassed and so said nothing. This created a flurry of activity on my part. I set to work creating coversheets for all pupil exercise books with target grades and spaces for grades throughout the year, so that the target could be seen, along with the progress that was being made, and the next steps that pupils needed to take to improve. Any question that might be asked in the future could be easily answered by any pupil I taught by looking at their unopened exercise book. Pupils spent a lesson sticking these on the front of their books and filling them in, but it felt hollow. We were doing this for me to attain a higher grade, not them. I was the one who was being assessed.

Ball's descriptions of performativity and fabrication and the tone of the paper seemed to speak to me. It made me question what I was doing, and who I was doing it for, and in a way this was empowering. I liked the emotive writing, and I liked its warning: for me it was a little like a call to arms, and it felt different reading about this in an academic journal than from hearing people moan in the staffroom. Ball gave authority to the sense of unease that I had. He explained and addressed the performative discourse in Education, which I was reacting to rather than reflecting on, and he said that it was not okay. The centrality and wide reach of Ball's paper shows that Ball was not only talking to me, but that my personal story is indicative of a wider reaction amongst educators to the performative discourse. It has been cited over 1,500 times (Journal of Education Policy, 2003) and I have gone on to use the words "performativity" and "fabrication" with his name in brackets after them in every piece of academic writing since, with this thesis no exception. What began to change

though, was that I started to look more closely at what he wrote, and I found that although he spoke to me, and gave me words that I latched on to, he did not speak *for* me. Instead, I started to worry that he was speaking through me.

Ball's argument that "working within a performative culture" creates "a set of dualisms and tensions" such as "a potential 'splitting' between the teachers own judgements about 'good practice' and the rigours of performance" (Ball, 2003: 221) was something that I wanted to write about. Performativity is presented as one of three "policy technologies" (Ball, 2003: 215), which "involve the calculated deployment of techniques and artefacts to organize human forces and capabilities into functioning networks of power" (Ball, 2003: 216). This could be described as an "authoritative discourse", that is, assumed knowledge that we are subjected to, which is monologic in nature and externally persuasive (Holland et al., 2001: 29). I adopted this view of performativity, despite not believing that "performance has no room for caring" (Ball, 2003: 224); I did not believe that "the policy technologies of market, management and performativity leave no space of an autonomous or collective ethical self" (Ball, 2003: 226) or that teachers had become "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1979: 294 cited in Ball, 2003: 219). Whilst I believed that there was a risk of these issues permeating into the experience of being a teacher, I would now argue that I was using Ball's paper as a new authoritative discourse. This is because I did not critically engage with the aspects of Ball's paper that I preferred to ignore, and instead adopted its widely used terminology to support my academic writing without unpicking it or challenging it. Consequently, I wrapped up the parts of it that were "tightly interwoven with [my] own word" (Holland et al., 2001: 182) with other integral parts of his argument that were not. In some ways, it could be argued



that I was being “ventriloquated” (Holland et al., 2001: 185; Ball, 2003: 218) by Ball, as my own message came packaged within his vocabulary, and therefore the additional meanings that were attached to his words.

On further interrogation, I have found that there is a disconnect with Ball’s and my own intentions, as I do not believe that I lost or sold my soul when I was a teacher, and my writing until now has used his terminology to explore how I have worked hard not to. There is also a contradiction which cannot be ignored: one of the binary options that he describes for teachers is to sell your soul or to leave the profession. It is difficult to argue that his paper should show a more complex picture with a range of choices, when I have seemingly proven his point by choosing one of these two options through leaving the secondary school classroom. I could no longer use these words without questioning the message that they carried. I needed to find a way to make them my own.

### 3.2 How Ball helped me to make his words my own

Perhaps it is surprising that it is through Ball’s other writing that I found a way to question him. In his chapter “The Necessity and Violence of Theory” in the Routledge Doctoral Student’s Companion, he describes Foucault and Bourdieu as “the two theorists I find most provocative, productive and ‘useful’” (Ball, 2010a: 69) but says that “I do not want to mimic or emulate these writers ... I want to be challenged by them and to struggle with the frustrations to certainty that they present” (Ball, 2010a: 69). Ball’s paper had challenged my way of thinking, and I had started to lean on it rather than challenge it, but I now needed to

find a way to look within it. I started to look for a theory that had a similar resonance to the Ball paper, where:

*I read a line or a paragraph, and it is like the author stretches out a hand from the page towards my own hand, and I think “yes, I think that too, that expresses something that I have never been quite able to capture with words” (Ball, 2010a: 69).*

When I started to read Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds theory (Holland et al., 2001) it felt that the outstretched hand could help me to move forward with Ball’s paper and to explore the tension between discourse and a desire for agency. It is a framework that starts with Foucault and Bourdieu, by placing constructivism and culturalism as opposing sides of an argument. However, the framework argues for a need to move forward, problematising and building on these theories and opening up spaces for “developing at an interface, within the interplay between the social and embodied sources of the self, in what might be called the self-in-practice” (Holland et al., 2001: 32). Holland et al. draw upon socio-cultural theorists Bakhtin and Vygotsky to show that people can be actively agentic, rather than being determined by the discourses that inevitably surround them. They argue that through building on these theories it is possible to see:

*Where—along the margins and interstices of collective cultural and social constructions—how, and with what difficulties human actors, individuals, and groups are able to redirect themselves (Holland et al., 2001:278).*

Figured Worlds theory then, allowed me to write with some hope. I could not align with the idea that teachers only had binary choices, as this was not my experience. Just like the snapshot of my practice being classed as substandard due to a pupil choosing not to answer a question that he knew the answer to, I could not be snapshotted into the person that Ball

describes, who chose to leave the profession. The snapshot represents something fixed, and this was not how I saw teaching practice, or who I was (and continue to become) as a teacher and now lecturer. Perhaps a better terminology would be “freeze-framed” which gives a sense of a something more continuous taking place, that is momentarily captured, but that has already moved on from that moment by the time it is analysed. Figured Worlds theory has given me a way to express and explore this tension, and therefore to stretch, expand upon and unpick Ball’s paper, so that I can continue to make meaning from it.

### 3.3 Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds

Holland et al. state that the aim of their theoretical framework is “to build upon and move beyond two central approaches ... to understand people’s actions and possibilities” (Holland et al., 2001: 8). It looks away from discourses as deterministic and binding, towards a sociohistoric “path of optimism” (Holland et al., 2003: 64) which, they argue, is based on “the possibilities for becoming, and the sense of freedom” (Holland et al., 2003: 64).

Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain’s primary research was based in anthropology and ethnography, and they note that there has been a shift in their field so that “the relationship between cultural forms and personhood is no longer taken for granted” (Holland et al., 2001: 31). They suggest that in looking beyond discourse to personhood we can see:

*How specific, often socially powerful, cultural discourses and practices both position people and provide them with the resources to respond to the problematic situations in which they find themselves* (Holland et al., 2001: 32).

This framework then, enables me to explore the tensions that I have found in Ball's paper. In this chapter, and throughout the thesis, I adopt the premise that we are not necessarily bound by social discourse, or social positioning, but that we interact with it. As such, rather than the authoritative discourse of performativity leaving "no space of an autonomous or collective ethical self" (Ball, 2003: 226), we are provided with the tools to respond. We do not respond, however, with absolute freedom. Holland et al. describe the contradictory nature of "gaining mastery" of a "cultural toolkit", which is used to gain a new standpoint "by submitting themselves to another set of cultural forms that have their own peculiar limitations and constraints" (Holland et al., 2001: 65).

This can be seen in the way Ball's paper alerted me to the performative discourse that I was being worked by as a teacher, but as I used it to talk of liberation, I adopted a new set of constraints and self-understandings. It would be difficult to argue that this is the path of optimism that I might have been looking for, but whilst I did at times have to choose between "caring about each other [and] caring about performances" (Ball, 2003: 224), I could also work at the margins and within the interstices of the performativity discourse and do both. Ball's paper meant that I could recognise and name the authoritative discourse, and in doing so, achieve "outsideness" (Bakhtin, 1981 cited in Holland et al., 2001 174) from it so that I could respond to it.

### 3.3.1 The Space of Authoring

So far, I have been talking about authoritative discourses as if they exist in a vacuum.

Holland et al. use Bakhtin's works to describe how an authoritative discourse can be seen as monologic, but that:

*Sentient beings always exist in a state of being "addressed" and in the process of "answering". People coexist, always in mutual orientation moving to action; there is no human action which is singularly expressive*  
(Holland et al., 2001: 169).

This is something that Holquist, writing about Bakhtin's work, refers to as "dialogism" (Holquist, 2002). For Holquist, dialogism "begins by visualizing existence as an event" where "existence is addressed to me as a riot of inchoate potential messages", of which some "come to me in the form of primitive physiological stimuli, some in the form of natural language, and some in social codes, or ideologies" (Holquist, 2002: 46). Dialogism is the act of addressing and answering stimuli or voices, but what Holquist and Holland et al. make clear, by making reference to Bakhtin, is that there are multiple voices and stimuli, and that our existence is heteroglossic as:

*So long as I am in existence, I am in a particular place, and must respond to all these stimuli either by ignoring them or in a response that takes the form of making sense, of producing—for it is a form of work—meaning out of such utterances* (Holquist, 2002:46).

Holland et al. build on the Bakhtinian concept of dialogism to say that we use our "inner speech" (Vygotsky, 1978: 57; Bakhtin, 1981: 145) which they refer to as an "inner voice" (Holland et al., 2001:219) to address external voices and that this is powerful as:

*In the making of meaning, we "author" the world. But the "I" is by no means a freewheeling agent, authoring worlds from creative springs*

*within. Rather, the “I” is more like Lévi-Strauss’s (1966) bricoleur, who builds with pre-existing materials. In authoring the world, in putting words to the world that addresses her, the “I” draws upon the languages, the dialects, the words of others to which she has been exposed. One is more or less condemned, in the work of expression, to choices because “heteroglossia,” the simultaneity of different languages and of their associated values and presuppositions, is the rule in social life. (Holland et al., 2001: 170).*

The above quote has particular significance, as it shows how we are both liberated and constrained by the voices of others. Inner speech addresses social rules, and words or narratives that carry values with them, and it answers them. Social and personal values are carried in the words of others (Bakhtin, 1981: 293) and we use our inner voice to grapple with the many voices that we hear in order to make our own meaning from them. Whilst we are limited to the words, values and presuppositions that we are exposed to, we are able to make our own meaning from them. Our inner voice appropriates, resists, accepts and rejects certain aspects of the meaning that is offered to us, so that these are not binary choices. When we express ourselves, we choose words from the “simultaneity of different languages and of their associated values and presupposition” (Holland et al., 2001: 170) but as we put these words together, we author them. We mix their initial meanings with other words or interpretations of the same word so that they shift slightly. We add the meaning that we make to the meanings that they hold so that we author them. “Dualisms” then mutate, so that more possibilities exist within them. Even when we are presented with “either / or” choices, we interpret these choices according to our own understanding of them so that there are slightly different options available to us within these margins of choice.

Ball refers to a “values schizophrenia” in his paper. This choice of word gives a sense of dysfunction to the competing voices that teachers must address as they adapt their practice to accommodate the performative discourse. Rather than explore the complexity of being faced with different voices that challenge our values, which we have no choice but to make meaning from, Ball’s paper only offers us the meaning that he makes from this situation. For him, teachers experience this as a “values schizophrenia” where “commitment, judgement and authenticity within practice are sacrificed for impression and performance” (Ball, 2003: 221). This implies that the teacher can choose either values or performance, but not that the teacher is addressed by both and therefore forced to respond by making meaning from both.

There is a contrast between Ball’s description of heteroglossia as dysfunctional and Bakhtin, Vygotsky and Holland et al.’s assumption that it is a fact of life. If we consider that our existence is inevitably heteroglossic, and that we necessarily make meaning from “a cacophony of different languages and perspectives” (Holland et al., 2001: 184), the “dualisms or tensions” (Ball, 2003: 223) that Ball suggests lead to the a set of binary choice such as selling your soul or leaving the profession are too limited. In using a Foucauldian lens that ties teachers to “subject-positions” (Ball, 2003: 218) and portraying them as “docile bodies” (Foucault, 1977: 294; Ball, 2003: 219) Ball creates a picture of a passive and dysfunctional teacher whose choices are to either retain their old values and leave the profession or accept the new performative values and stay. Their identities are pre-formed and their options are limited to choosing between his descriptions of old and new values, and the meanings that he attaches to them of right or wrong.

Holland et al. “reject the simplistic notion that identities are internalized in a sort of faxing process that unproblematically reproduces the collective upon the individual” (Holland et al., 2001: 169). Instead they use Bakhtin’s concepts to “put words to an alternative vision, organized around the conflictual, continuing dialogic of an inner speech where active identities are ever forming” (Holland et al., 2001: 169). This can be understood through Bakhtin’s concept of “addressivity”, which Holquist describes as inevitable and active stating that:

*To understand existence as “addressed to me” does not mean I am a passive receptacle into which events fall, as letters drop into mailboxes. Addressivity means rather that I am an event, the event of constantly responding to utterances from the different worlds I pass through (Holquist, 2002: 47).*

The individual that I am referring to then, is not a passive subject, and s/he does not receive voices or discourses without engaging with them. The voices “have to be put together in some way” (Holland et al., 2001: 178) and this is achieved through “the orchestration of such voices, which Bakhtin calls self-authoring” (Holland et al., 2001: 178).

For the teacher, as described in Ball’s paper, there may well be a dichotomy between the “new policy technologies [of] market, managerialism and performativity” and the “older policy technologies of professionalism” (Ball, 2003: 216). This does not, however, mean that the teacher cannot orchestrate these voices and use their inner voice to author themselves by addressing both, alongside other competing voices. Holland et al. argue that, for Bakhtin, tensions are to be expected as “the voices, the symbols, are socially inscribed and



heteroglossic. Often the voices are in conflict” (Holland et al., 2001: 178). Addressivity means that we do not choose between two conflicting voices, but we answer them. We use our inner voice, and we orchestrate the myriad of other voices and symbols around us to gain an authorial stance. Holland et al. describe how mental health workers:

*are faced with the choice of either taking on these different languages and perspectives willy-nilly or developing a more or less stable “authorial stance,” a voice that over time speaks categorically and/or orchestrates the different voices in roughly comparable ways. A first step toward an authorial stance ... is the creation of internally persuasive discourses—external or authoritative speech that has been married to one’s own*  
(Holland et al., 2001: 182)

This is what I did with Ball’s argument in his paper. It was an authoritative discourse that in many ways married with my own. It addressed me, and I answered it in the light of the work that I was doing, and the other voices that told me what a good teacher was. At that time, I felt that it was speaking directly to me, and parts of it became tightly interwoven with my own thoughts and words. This internally persuasive discourse (IPD) was a step towards an authorial stance that I could use to write about the problems and struggles that I faced as a teacher who did not feel comfortable with the focus shifting from the pupil to the teacher, from care to performance. The IPD is described by Bakhtin as a discourse that guides our inner speech and our actions and adapts with them, so that:

*Internally persuasive discourse—as opposed to one that is externally authoritative—is, as it is affirmed through assimilation, tightly interwoven with “one’s own word.” In the everyday rounds of our consciousness, the internally persuasive word is half-ours and half-some-one else’s. Its creativity and productiveness consist precisely in the fact that such a word awakens new and independent words, that it organizes masses of our words from within, and does not remain in an isolated and static condition. (Bakhtin, 1981: 345-346 cited in Holland et al., 2001: 182).*

Ball's performativity discourse had become tightly interwoven with my own word, but I might argue that at the time it was not half mine and half Ball's, because I had not critically engaged with it. I found Ball's words useful to describe how being a teacher felt to me at that time. Although there was some tension in his use of binary choices and "dualisms" (Ball, 2003: 221), Ball's persuasive style and his words of warning meant that it was convenient and far easier to appropriate his whole argument, rather than to distinguish which aspects of it were useful to me. It is only "over time" that I have been able to orchestrate this voice and others in "roughly comparable ways" so that I can address these tensions. Bakhtin states that the internally persuasive discourse:

*Enters into an intense interaction, a struggle with other internally persuasive discourses. Our ideological development is just such an intense struggle within us for hegemony among various available verbal and ideological points of view, approaches, directions and values (Bakhtin, 1981: 346).*

Some teachers might find the performative discourse becomes an internally persuasive discourse, as it intertwines with their own, and others might reject it on the grounds that it is contradicted by too many other internally persuasive discourses that they cannot marry it to. Others, and for some time, I was one of them, choose to take a pragmatic stance in which they fabricate (Ball, 2003: 215) to publicly conform to the performative discourse, whilst still answering and addressing it in private. For example, when I created the sheets for the front of the exercise books I did not only create a way to be seen. I also created a way for a teenage boy to show that his target grade was a "D" without him having to voice that he was aiming for a grade that he did not aspire to, one that an authoritative discourse

said was not good enough. It was a knee-jerk reaction that hid older practices beneath the new, but I continued to act and to reflect, and I continued to answer and address the situations that I faced both in the moment, and over time. Lee and I had agreed that he was aiming for a C and he attained one, but he did not choose to express this to the Assistant Headteacher. The cover sheet allowed me to be seen to be doing my job correctly, and to allow Lee to point to a page that showed what he was aiming for and how he would achieve this grade. This was not just about performativity, it was also about responding to the situation and the pupil and “developing at the interface” (Holland et al., 2001: 32) both as it presented itself, and over time. It is only much later, and through the use of this theoretical framework that I reflected on how Lee was being positioned as a weak student by his target grade and did not feel able to make a claim to a different position (that of being capable of a C grade) to a person in authority. I also did not consider that through placing this target grade on the front of his book, despite private conversations, that I was also positioning him as a “D” student. At the time however, I was always aware of Lee, and other pupils having just this one experience of secondary education, rather than being in the loop that I was in, so that I needed to try to navigate the external pressures for them, and use my knowledge of the school and its systems, old and new, to create as smooth a path as possible for them. Sometimes the performative discourse affected this, but it did not stop me from trying, as I answered and addressed it.

This theoretical framework makes space to note that schools are made up, not only of teachers and support staff, but also the pupils that they are teaching. Whilst they are not the main focus of this study, they too have voices, and positions within the figured world of

the school. They too experience authoritative discourses and have their own internally persuasive discourses, as well as the ones that they bring in from their other Figured Worlds. Teaching is not just about knowledge transfer, it is also about the relationships that are formed with the students that we teach, and often their parents. Teaching is a heteroglossic role where internally persuasive discourses are at least as important as the authoritative ones, and they constantly bump up against each other. A great deal of my time was spent trying to convince teenagers that they could do something, when their internally persuasive discourse told them otherwise. Teaching for me is very much about being one of the many voices that a child hears, and hoping that it is a positive one. This means that the teacher needs to work with and around a variety of competing discourses and to actively use them “to respond to the problematic situations in which they find themselves” (Holland et al., 2001: 32). The teacher’s self-in-practice develops “at an interface” (Holland et al., 2001: 32) where the conflicting voices around them are orchestrated and answered in varying degrees. This takes place on intimate terrain, within a specific school setting, with its own set of rules and understandings so that teacher identity is always nuanced.

Ball’s paper brought the performative discourse to the forefront, but its assumption of dualisms and the teacher who is passive and sutured to a subject-position does not allow these nuances of teacher identity in practice to be seen. The Figured Worlds theoretical framework offers a way to look at how performativity is experienced by teachers and how they find a way to co-develop with it (Holland et al., 2001: 33). It assumes that they are

actively answering and addressing the many voices that they encounter and using them to author themselves and form multiple, unfixed identities within the worlds that they inhabit.

### 3.3.2 The Figured World of the School

Holland et al. describe Figured Worlds as “figurative, narrativized, or dramatized worlds” (Holland et al., 2001: 53) which “rest upon people’s abilities to form and be formed in collectively realised ‘as if’ realms” (Holland et al., 2001: 49). The school is a place that teachers and pupils participate in as a “socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others” (Holland et al., 2001: 52). For example, in my children’s schools, pupils wear uniforms, but in my nephew’s school they do not. The wearing of a uniform is collectively interpreted as the norm or as odd depending on the rules of the particular school. Similarly, if a pupil wants to show resistance to the school and its rules, they can choose to subvert the way that they wear their uniform.

In this thesis, the figured world of the school is important to understanding the performative narrative, and the way that teachers experience it. There is the “standard plot” (Holland et al., 2001: 52), which I would refer to as the neoliberalist ideology, or more specifically competitive environment of “high stakes testing”, league tables and Ofsted inspections which rank school performance. This standard plot or discourse describes how things are and is therefore what the schools set themselves against. In the school where I worked, the introduction of performative quality assurance measures followed a negative

Ofsted inspection. This was, in part, based on evidence of good practice not being visible, as it was not overtly monitored or standardised. The school was under pressure to change the significance assigned to “say[ing] what one must say in order to be heard” (Lyotard, 1984: 21) and the outcomes that it valued. The way that I responded was in part due to the collective sense of disappointment after the inspection, and the desire to help the school to be seen as good again. The school had a good reputation locally, and there was a collective identity of working in a good school. My identity as a teacher was linked to the way that I identified with the school, and it was formed with the staff that I worked with, whose identities were also forming in relation to and with the school. Every day we would enter into the figured world of that particular school and whether we appropriated or resisted aspects of the “as if” realm, we would do so based on an understanding of it. We invested in the figured world of the school, and what it meant to be a teacher within it, and we did this not only collectively but also individually. This investment meant that the world continued to evolve as whether “by means of ... appropriation, objectification and communications, the world itself is also reproduced, forming and reforming in the practices of its participants” (Holland et al., 2001: 53).

### 3.3.3 Positionality

In the figured world of the school, hierarchy and status are of importance. For example, pupils are expected to call teachers by their title, or “Sir” or “Miss”. Personally, I struggled with calling a parent to talk to them about their child and introducing myself as “Mrs. Goodley”. It felt pompous, and a claim to power or status that I did not feel was in keeping with the relationship that I was trying to form with them. Generally, when I was calling

parents, it was because there was a problem that I wanted their help with, and making this authoritative claim did not feel the best way to elicit support. I found the contradiction of calling professors and doctors by their first name when studying at university, then talking to parents using my own, less impressive formal title a little nonsensical. The use of marital status as claims of authority, did not seem to fit with the way that I interacted with people beyond the figured world of the school. I was calling upon both a figurative and positional identity when I introduced myself as “Mrs. Goodley” or “Head of Department”. These “figurative identities” which “are about signs that evoke storylines or plots among generic characters” (Holland et al., 2001: 125) are also imbued with “the day-to-day and on-the-ground relations of power, deference and entitlement” (Holland et al., 2001: 127).

Holland et al. build the idea of positional identities on Bourdieu’s theory of social practice. In particular they use his concepts of “habitus, field and symbolic capital” (Bourdieu, 1990) where facets of lived worlds are “power, status, relative privilege, and their negotiation” and facets of lived identities are seeing one’s self as “entitled or as disqualified and inappropriate” (Holland et al., 2001: 125). Holland et al. state that Figured Worlds are similar to Bourdieu’s “field” (Holland et al., 2001: 60) and that positional or relational identities, are directly linked to the figured world, as they “are a counterpart of figuration” based on “the activity of positioning [which] refers back to the cultural lay of the land [and] to Figured Worlds” (Holland et al., 2001: 172). The terms positional and relational identities, invoke Bourdieu’s description of “habitus” where one has a “feel for the game” and the “positions” that one plays within it in relation to others” (Holland et al., 2001: 138; Bourdieu, 1990: 66).

Holland et al. describe how “positional identities manifest themselves in different social situations” (Holland et al., 2001: 128) and how “social claims” (Holland et al., 2001: 127) are made as they do so. They state that:

*Bourdieu (1977) acknowledges, as did Bakhtin (1986), speakers’ awareness of the differential social valuing of languages, genres, and styles of speaking, and he emphasizes the habitual, out-of-awareness assessments one makes before and during conversation* (Holland et al., 2001: 128)

In linking Bakhtin and Bourdieu together, Holland et al. show how voices are orchestrated as the teacher pulls together strands from different influences and uses them to position themselves and others.

Position is a powerful word, as it also invokes the concept of “subject-position” which Holland et al. discuss as they describe “Gyanumaya, the woman who climbed up the house” (Holland et al., 2001: 3) and how she was afforded different subject positions such as “a welcome guest” and “a bearer of pollution” (Holland et al., 2001: 16). They argue that her choice to climb the house was based, not just on the powerful discourses that oppressed her (Holland et al., 2001: 16) or the “cultural proscriptions of caste” which was her “habitus” or “history-in-person” (Holland et al., 2001: 18) but a combination of the two. Again, they argue that we are heteroglossic and that Gyanumaya was not “sutured” to her subject-position “which makes the person and the position seem to arrive preformed at the moment of suturing” (Holland et al., 2001: 33). Instead they state that the person and the position are never a “proper-fit” and that discourses overlap, so that the person co-develops with them, and on occasion improvises.



The concept that one cannot be sutured to a subject-position is important to this thesis, as Ball's paper uses this term, which is based on a monoglossic, Foucauldian concept that teachers are at least at risk of becoming "docile bodies" led by the performative discourse, and trapped within binary choices such as to "authenticity" or "performance" (Ball, 2003: 221). I have found the concept of multiple Figured Worlds; multiple voices and multiple identities which we co-develop with, rather than are bound to and by, useful. It has helped me to see how I was starting to co-develop and change as I entered into the world of academia, and how this change included an appropriation of and then a resistance to Ball's arguments. It also helps me to articulate how I am not rejecting his words, rather I am trying to move forward with them.

My reaction to performativity is a part of my history-in-person, as a teacher, as a postgraduate student and now as a lecturer. My identity is tied into these worlds, and the social claims that I make in relation to, and based on them. They are integral to the way that I approach education as a parent, to the way that I talk to my children's teachers at parent's evening and how my children and I talk about their school day, their homework and their aspirations. The "interlap" – the interstices and the margins of these worlds and my understanding of the positions that I hold, have held, and may hold in the future are important to the way that I see myself. They are also important to the way that I inadvertently and consciously position myself in accordance with my understanding of these Figured Worlds and my "feel of the game" within them and they indicate my awareness of the social claims that are made by others. This awareness is important, as it means that at

times I am acting consciously and reacting to these, sometimes competing, Figured Worlds and the positional identities and fields of power of the “actors” within them. This “outsideness” (Bakhtin, 1986: 7) allows me to notice these worlds, to look at where the interstices and boundaries are and to decide how to act within each of them and across them.

Activity is not always based on conscious decisions, however. The way that I reacted to being positioned as a teacher whose practice “required improvement” when Lee did not reveal his target grade to the Assistant Headteacher was to respond emotionally, taking the grade that I was given as a sign of my identity as a teacher, not a minor incident. I sought to reposition myself quickly, and unequivocally for all future assessments as a good teacher. In fact, this assessment shocked my self-understanding, my sense of figurative and positional identity so profoundly that I sought to reposition myself as not only “good” but “outstanding”. The labelling of a teacher based on isolated incidents caused me to improvise and to over respond. I over articulated, and it took many years for me to realise that I had sensed danger in the way that I was positioned. I have since noticed that I appropriated Ball’s paper because I was scared of how easy it was to re-position me as “requiring improvement” based on a fleeting moment. Where I had always considered that the best teachers were never satisfied with their work; that they always saw areas in their lessons and their practice that could improve; “improvement” was now also repositioned as meaning not good enough. I saw how, despite the potential to show improvement in the next audit, that my positional identity would always retain this one judgement unless I eradicated it entirely.

### 3.3.4 Appropriation, resistance and rupture

Holland et al. state that “positional identities develop heuristically over time” (Holland et al., 2001: 137) and refer to Vygotsky’s “semiotic mediation” (Vygotsky, 1978: 40) as a way for the “neophyte” (Holland et al., 2001: 60, 137) not only to develop a “feel for the game” and “the dispositions of relational identities” (Holland et al., 2001: 137) but also a “means by which these dispositions can be countered and sometimes overcome” (Holland et al., 2001: 137). They argue that “the usual path to relational identity is through simple associations that pass unnoticed in any conscious way” (Holland et al., 2001: 139) but that “other indices of positional identities ... become conscious and available as tools that can be used to affect the self and other” (Holland et al., 2001: 140).

For me, the pupil exercise book became an important artefact that signified my role as a teacher, and which I used to mediate how I was positioned by others in the performative narrative. Lee’s reluctance to tell the Assistant Headteacher his target grade led me to question how I could find a way for all pupils to have this information to hand, should they need it. I knew that the pupils’ books would be looked at and scrutinised both separately and in any interview with a pupil, and that this would be used in part to check how well I was performing as a teacher. I became consciously aware of the importance of the exercise book and began to use it as a tool to mediate my position in the school. At that point I appropriated the performative discourse to maintain my positional identity, and my practice as a teacher began to include more and more ways to be seen to be a good, or better still an outstanding, teacher. I used the “associated markers [that were] clearly figured” (Holland et

al., 2001: 140) and this practice became a habit. The exercise book became a “fossilised” marker of the good teacher in the figured world of the school, and a part of “mundane life”. For me though, I struggled with what the practice meant for the students that I was teaching, as the stamps and brightly coloured sheets did not seem to help students to learn. This is why the positional claim of being an outstanding teacher that I was making through the books felt hollow. The practice, and therefore the positional identity that it offered could not “function on intimate terrain” (Holland et al., 2001: 64) as I could not “take them as meaningful for [my]self” (Holland et al., 2001: 64). This meant that I began to resist this practice and what it stood for, and to see it differently. I also became more aware of how others were reacting to this type of practice.

### 3.3.5 Fissures

Whilst several of us were marking during a free period one day there was virtually no talking. We were all trying to mark our books as quickly as possible, and so the only sounds that could be heard were green pens scratching on paper or the sound of stamps imprinting messages on books. The sound of our marking had thuds to it. At one point a colleague looked up and said, “It feels more like a post office than a school” and we all laughed. The humorous comment didn’t leave me though, as it was a little too perceptive. In different ways we were starting to mock and play with the relatively new practices that were now embedded. The validity in our practice was starting to be questioned, and we were sharing not only complaints but jokes and ways to gently subvert.

Small individual acts start to make small fissures in the practices of a figured world. The world is being addressed and answered but it is not inert, it interacts. For Holland et al.:

*Activity predicated upon a figured world is never quite single, never quite pure. It is dialogized, figured against other possible positions, other possible worlds. Our habitual identities bump up against one another. And this is just Bakhtin's point. The space of freedom that is the space of play between these vocations is the space of the author" (Holland et al., 2001: 238).*

Holland et al. focus on the potential to make new worlds through serious play, challenging the social and cultural constructs as "through play our fancied selves become material" (Holland et al., 2001: 236). The "outsideness" required for the post office comment to be humorous meant a collective was becoming more critically aware. The performative acts were being mocked and therefore were becoming less powerful, as the beginning of resistance started to show. Collective fissures were starting to appear, and these reinforced my personal tensions.

The instances that I have described in this chapter were moments of appropriation leading to moments of resistance. They were experiences, which Bourdieu describes as "awakenings of consciousness" (Bourdieu, 2000: 177) where my inner voice not only resisted but started to reject the ways that being a good teacher was identified, and therefore what a good teacher was becoming. Holland et al. call these "ruptures of the taken-for-granted" so that "alternative figurings" (Holland et al., 2001: 141) can become available.

My own rupture, or the point when I “began to liberate myself from the other’s discourses” took place just before a lesson observation. It was breaktime and a pupil knocked on my door to ask if they could talk to me about something important. I paused. I had a child in front of me who trusted me with a personal problem and in the moment that I paused I was questioning if I had time to listen to them when I had to get my lesson, which was to be observed, set up. I had to make a decision about what a good teacher really was, and if it was in these ten minutes where I listened or in the next fifty minutes where I performed. I chose to listen and my inner voice rejoiced.

### 3.4 Choosing How To Act

The most important aspect of this theoretical framework is that it not only enables us to look at how teachers can be bound by discourse, but that they can use it to direct their own behaviour and to figure things differently.

Ball’s paper leaves gaps where the writing is perhaps a little too robust, a little too persuasive and belies the day to day of living and experiencing the figured world of the school. His use of binaries covers up the spaces where teachers are “answering and addressing” the orchestration of voices that are shaped by discourse in order to make sense of the world, their place within it and “the possibilities for becoming” (Holland et al., 2001: 64). Nevertheless, I used his paper to “find a place to stand” that was “not otherwise offered in the rituals of [my daily life]” (Holland et al., 2001: 64). The Figured Worlds theoretical lens extends Ball’s paper “to create not a dichotomy but a continuum” (Holland et al., 2001: 141) where it becomes possible to look within his dualisms and find the spaces

to redirect one's behaviour. This means that it is possible to reposition the teacher as a person who makes active choices that are not predetermined or binary.

In the next chapter I will discuss methodological reasoning and the methods that I have used in this thesis. I will also reframe my research questions to reflect the spaces to notice agency that this theoretical framework offers.

# 4 Methodology

So far in this piece of research, I have explained how the research questions were formed, using academic literature, the “Figured Worlds” theoretical framework and my own experiences as a teacher. In this chapter I will explore how these have also impacted on the way that I have chosen to collect and analyse data, and to reframe my research questions in order to answer them.

## 4.1 Epistemological tensions

Crotty argues that justifications for our choice of methodology reach into the assumptions about reality that we bring into our research (Crotty, 2012: 2). He goes on to explain that our epistemology leads to our theoretical perspective and that from here follow our methodology and methods. He argues that these flow in different directions and that they are not fixed, whilst there are preferences within paradigms (Crotty, 2012: 4).

This piece of research is based on my reaction to the paradigm that is currently being used by policy-makers to create knowledge about teachers, in order to understand how, and in what ways, this performative discourse affects them. In this sense, my piece of writing is based on a very similar premise to Stephen Ball’s 2003 paper. It is the reason that his work was so appealing to me when I first read it, as he made me consider the way that teacher professionalism was becoming objective rather than subjective and how the neoliberalist epistemology was leading to a rationale for methods to assess teachers in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. This piece of research then is a reaction to the way that



teacher work was becoming quantified, as this did not fit my ways of understanding what it meant to be a teacher.

The reason why my story is important to the way that I answer my research questions, is that I have been experiencing an epistemological struggle. How truths are created about the purpose of education, and therefore the role of the teacher through performative measures does not sit comfortably with me as a way to describe the whole picture of what it means to be a teacher.

I wanted to move away “from the positivist pursuit of objectivity” to the “exploration and elaboration of subjectivity” (Goodson, 2017: 3) and therefore understand teaching in terms that go beyond the audit culture that permeates it. This is important to the research aims of this thesis, as I am interested in shifting the focus, not in making claims that there is “one true way” of seeing, or that there is one way of conducting research (Crotty, 2012: 13). This shift in focus, does not however agree with the argument that positivist approaches to social sciences through “restricting, simplifying and controlling variables are more likely to end up with a pruned, synthetic version of a whole, a constructed play of puppets in a restricted environment” (Cohen et al., 2011: 15). Rather, this is another tension that I am trying to explore in this thesis, and it is where the theoretical approach that I am using differs from the one that Ball uses when he describes the “terrors of performativity” (Ball, 2003: 215).

## 4.2 Theoretical underpinnings

In “The Teacher’s Soul and the Terrors of Performativity” Ball uses Foucauldian concepts to describe how performativity can be seen as “governing the soul” (Rose, 1999; Ball, 2003). The teachers voices that Ball uses, many taken from research by Jeffrey and Woods (1998), are described as illustrations of this governance which change not only what teachers do but who they are (Ball, 2003: 215). Ball in this section is using tools from Foucault, in order to explain how teachers are being governed by the “gaze” (Foucault, 1977:217) and in doing so he moves away from Woods’ interactionist approach to research (Woods et al., 1997: 51; Cohen et al., 2011: 20). It is possible that one of the reasons that Ball’s paper had such resonance, was his ability to use strong and powerful data that showed teachers reacting and interacting with the performative discourse, before theorising them as “technicians of behaviour” or “docile bodies” (Foucault, 1977: 294; Ball, 2003: 219).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison describe Woods’ approach to research as a form of symbolic interactionism (Cohen et al., 2011: 19) and attribute three important strands to him. These are that:

1. *Human beings act towards things based on the meanings they have for them.*
2. *Attribution of meaning to objects through symbols is a continuous process.*
3. *This process takes place in a social context (Woods, 1979: 16; Cohen et al., 2011: 20).*

This type of approach “creates a more active image” of the teacher and “rejects the image of the passive” (Cohen et al., 2011: 20) or in this case “governed” one (Ball, 2003: 221; Rose, 1999).

My study is underpinned by a theoretical framework that is also interested in seeing the teacher as an agent, and it bears many similarities to interactionist symbolism, including its pragmatic approach (Crotty, 2012: 72). It is perhaps this pragmatism that would not take issue with it being placed in this category. Nevertheless, its focus is on how teachers form their identities within the many discourses of the school environment that they are in, and the ways that they find spaces for agency. There is a multiplicity of voices and discourses that teachers interact with, and they must choose how to author themselves in the light of these voices. The key theoretical underpinning then is that of “dialogism” (Holquist, 2002; Bakhtin, 1981) rather than interactionism (Woods et al., 1997: xiii; Woods, 1979: 19). The nuance here is the understanding that teachers form their professional identities by not just interacting with the performative discourse, but responding to it and to other competing discourses. In turn, in hearing the teacher’s voice and adding it to the other voices that comment on what it means to be a teacher in a performative culture, meanings can be made that can add to the literature in this area.

#### 4.3 Methodological approach

This study uses a narrative approach, which uses interviews as a method to collect data and focus on the stories that the teacher chooses to tell, allowing the researcher to “explore the complexity and the multi-faced feature of human agency” (Goodson, 2017: 4). Using narratives can allow for the teachers voice to be heard (Goodson, 2008: 6) but caution is required, particularly where there is an “an attempt to ‘sponsor the voice’ of the narrative” (Goodson, 2017: 4). Narratives need to be contextually based, so that the time, the place and social understandings are also present (Goodson, 2017: 5). There are a number of

different narrative approaches, three of which I have considered in order to inform this study; these are life histories, life stories and narrative inquiry.

The “narrative life story” approach is where the interviewee is asked to tell the researcher about their lives uninterrupted until they reach the present moment (Horsdal, 2017: 261). The data is transcribed at the time of the interview and then analysed in terms of how the story is constructed, for example the genre of story the participants choose to tell and their role within that story (Horsdal, 2017: 268). The aspect of the teacher constructing a story without interruption appeals to the romantic sense of the novel, but the potential of romanticising these stories (Downs, 2017: 464) raises questions of academic rigour. There would be no place to seek clarification during the story, there would be no guiding questions and therefore I worried that I would over or under interpret what teachers said, or what I wanted to hear them say.

The Narrative Inquiry (NI) approach is described as “stories lived and told”. In order to conduct this sort of research, the researcher must enter “into the midst” of the teacher(s)’ working environments as a way of understanding experience (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 20). This approach allows the researcher to understand the context of the teacher’s story by experiencing it for themselves. The experience of living the story with the teacher in some way can lessen the gap of contextual understanding between the teacher and researcher in order to give a sense of the “complexity and the nested quality of stories told, lived, co-composed, and eventually narrated in a research text” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: xvii). This approach differs greatly from the narrative life story. The researcher

actually enters into the world of the teacher and there is a relational aspect to the way that the research is conducted and the way that data is composed. This seemed problematic to me, however, as I was cautious that the researcher entering into the school would create additional performative pressures for the teacher. I was also worried that in the school setting the performative discourse might have more prominence for the teacher. My greatest tension with this method though, was that I might also take on the role of observer and cast judgement on the teacher. The appeal of the teacher telling their own story remained, as my research questions are focussed on what they choose to tell me, not what I choose to see.

It is for this reason that my initial research design was closely aligned with the Life History approach. Goodson describes Life History as a way to explore the teacher's story as a "story of action in a historical context" (Goodson, 2017: 5). To do this, there is an initial interview where the researcher encourages a "flow with limited interrogation" not only to allow the participants to control the conversation, but also to reduce the issue of researcher power. The interviewer then returns to conduct several "inter-views" where the researcher asks questions to clarify and explore meaning and the conversation is more of an exchange of ideas. This is triangulated with "various kinds of personal documents such as diaries, photographs and letters" (Bryman, 2012: 545).

I had intended to interview the participants three times each, to see how teachers experienced performativity over a period of time and also to ask them to clarify specific comments and to bring items that make performativity visible. What I found on analysing

the first interviews though, was that I had a rich and complicated story from each participant. These were not the stories that I had anticipated, and they did not talk about performativity and fabrications in the ways that I had imagined. I also noted that I had asked a number of questions within the interview, which they had answered through appropriation, resistance or rejection. I planned to return and ask specifically about fabrication, as it did not appear in their stories, but I felt that this would be pushing my own ideas onto them. I did not want to do this, so instead I revisited how my methodology, methods and framework for analysis would answer my research questions, without asking the teachers in this study to tell me the story that I wanted them to tell.

Kalekin-Fishman states that it is not unusual in narrative research texts to find the researcher apologising from deviating from the rules, and that this results in a shaping and re-shaping of methodologies (Kalekin-Fishman, 2017: 144). My concept of narrative approaches to research are influenced by the stories that the participants told me, by the literature around narrative research, and the theoretical framework that I am using. It is confusing and it is hard to find a voice as an aspiring researcher within these authoritative texts. It is, however, a requirement, not just for this thesis, but also because I need to address these voices and find a space to self-author within it. This again turns back to how I am personally influenced by the performative discourse – I am compelled to follow the rules that show what success looks like, even when the concepts do not quite fit the boxes. It also, more tellingly shows that I struggle to think about methodology or method without considering dialogism and the Figured Worlds theoretical framework.

There are examples of texts that use theory as method (Murphy and Costa, 2015; Solomon et al., 2016), and who argue that using sociocultural theory adds to a narrative approach to research (Braathe and Solomon, 2014; Moen, 2006). When the Figured Worlds' theoretical framework returns to the forefront of the research rationale, the narrative approach remains, but tools become available to ask more specific research questions, and therefore to collect and analyse data.

#### 4.4 Data Analysis (an iterative process)

I have found describing the actual process of analysing the data a difficult one, as it has taken place over a long period of time. Initially, I approached analysing the interviews as staged, as I had intended to conduct several interviews with each participant. I transcribed and analysed each interview separately, returning to them often, as the process of analysis and interpreting the interviews through the theoretical framework took a great deal of time. It is through listening, writing and reading that I have slowly found a way to unwrap the stories that were told to me in the interview, and to separate them from my own.

At first, I listened to the interviews a number of times, as I transcribed them. I tried to look for specific themes that ran through the story, looking for performativity, but also themes from the theoretical framework that I thought would prove important. For example, for Stephanie, I looked for her descriptions of:

- the Figured World of the School
- her identity as a teacher, Head of Department and potential leader
- the actors in her story
- the performative discourse
- resistance

- positionality
- fabrication
- agency
- metaphors

To do this I copied and pasted sections of the story into a table (see appendix C), essentially cutting the story up, and then tried to analyse these in a systematic way (see appendix D) such as how Stephanie describes the ‘standard plot’ of what a good teacher, good pupil and good leader looks like to them.

What I found with this approach was that I was cutting up her story and trying to find a way to make it analysable according to themes. I felt that I was writing her story out of the analysis, and therefore, the interactions, the contradictions and the moments where her struggles were most apparent were reduced. It was still a useful first step to understanding her story, but it did not help me to tell it. There are spaces within this where I make notes to myself, and comment on the story and the interview and where I was finding it difficult. These turned out to be important points of the analysis that I returned to later.

From here, I decided to go back to the story and look for a way to operationalise the theory by using it as a lens to see how Stephanie tells her story. I annotated her transcript (see appendix E), then wrote out the cadence and points of interest in her story, trying to capture why I found it so moving. I moved away from tables and cutting up her story to writing it out as a flow chart. Initially I looked for the same things as in the bullet points above, but I looked for them as a part of a story, and also looked at how it was constructed (see appendix F). I looked for repetition, and key points that she seems to want to make,



and perhaps the story that she is trying to tell (that of still being happy in the classroom) and the one that she can't help but tell (how difficult it is, and 'the row of smiling facing watching her').

From here I wrote an analysis of the interview, following its shape. Through reading it and discussing it, I found that I had written myself out of the interview, as if trying to suggest that I was using the Life Story method (Horsdal, 2017: 261), but this was not the case. There were moments in the interview when she had used my name to draw me in, such as when she tells me that she doesn't feel that good (as a teacher) anymore, or when she describes how data is being used at the school and positions me as a student in her class (see appendix G). There are also other points, particularly where she uses metaphors, such as the crab bucket, where I ask her if she feels that this is something she understands and she appropriates the metaphor for her students, saying that she too is pulled back in (see appendix H). I wrote the analysis again, looking for these moments where the story is co-constructed and how the interview shapes it.

I then re-wrote the analysis to place these moments into her story. Based on this process, I began to formulate a way of approaching data analysis.

- Conduct interview
- Listen to interview and transcribe
- Annotate interview looking closely at the story that participants choose to tell and how my questions and comments are received (are they appropriated, resisted or rejected?)
- Write a flow chart of the story that has been told
- Look for figures and metaphors, and the type of story participants are trying to tell.

- Look for conflict, contradictions and repetition
- What are the key points that are being made? How can these be interpreted?
- Are there spaces for agency? What are the key discourses that are described? Does performativity come up and if so, how?
- How is the story co-constructed? What part do I play?
- Write a first analysis following the flow of the story commenting on the above
- Unpick the story again asking:
  - Where do I struggle to analyse?
  - What is blocking the story?
  - What is blocking my analysis?
  - Where am I struggling with how the story sounds and how it was told in the interview?
  - How can the theory help me to understand these problems?
  - What is missing that seems important?
- Write analysis again.

I wrote an interview one analysis for Stephanie, Sarah and Jasmine, and then wrote a list of areas that were “missing” from the stories that I would like to explore in interview two.

However, I noted that I was writing a list of questions that did not fit with the stories that were told, rather they were questions that would allow me to write the thesis that I had intended to. My initial questions had been about the lived experience of the teacher, but my follow up interview questions were about fabrication, micro-management, surveillance and how they chose to reject them.

This was an important point in the research process. I had found a theoretical framework that helped me to understand the importance of the story that people tell, and how these stories make up their identities (Holland et al., 2001: 1) and yet, I was planning to return to the interviewees with questions that would aim to adapt these stories in the light of my own. I found myself resisting the second interviews and therefore the story that I had wanted to tell, in favour of the ones that I had been told. This resistance was very

important to the way that this thesis has changed and marks a point where I feel that I moved from being an ex-teacher who wanted to write about teacher agency within the performative discourse, to a doctoral candidate who appreciated the importance of the data that had been collected and analysed and where it was starting to fit into the field of literature that I had been reading. I revisited my initial aims, objectives and research questions and noted that they were beginning to change. This was an unsettling and difficult time where I felt that being a doctoral student had changed me so that I no longer fitted into the world of the teacher that I had once known, understood and been a part of. The decision not to conduct further interviews was a part of my own identity work, which is also ongoing, so that the process of analysing the data, in my case at least, was also a reflective one.

After decided not to conduct further interviews I returned to the first interviews and listening to them again, for tone and nuance. I made notes on the key areas of the theoretical framework that provided ways to interpret these stories and used these as tools for analysis (see analytical framework). Following this, I decided to keep the shape of Stephanie's story, but to pull out key points in Sarah and Jasmine's. I highlighted important quotes and points of repetition, and pulled these together as important threads in their stories. This shaped the sections so that they were defined by the words used by the participants, rather than my own, although it was based on the way that I interpreted their importance and the way that the interview unfolded.

For the discussion I have continued to follow a similar format, using the tools from the theoretical framework as an analytic framework to answer my revised research questions.

I read through the sections, using the tools for analysis and looking for repetition and common threads, and differences (see appendix I). I then linked this to the research questions, cross-referencing the three data analysis chapters using the tools from the analytical framework (see appendix J). I looked back at the literature, and created a grid of the pertinent literature (see appendix K), highlighting areas that were important to the discussion. I then shaped the discussion to question not only if and where agency was visible in each story, but also how the performative discourse seemed to have become entangled in how the standard plot of the teacher and the participants stories were formed.

#### 4.5 Operationalising the Theory

Heteroglossia is a basic human state and we are constantly addressing and answering the voices around us and using our own inner voice to author ourselves (Bakhtin, 1981).

Dialogism (Holquist, 2002; Holland et al., 2001) is based on an understanding that our identities are not fixed and that we co-develop with the environment that we are in, using words or utterances that once belonged to others but that we imbue with our own meaning. This means that agency is assumed from the start. The participants choose what story to tell, and as they are not acting in a vacuum, the figures and context of the school and the way that they are described are of importance. There is not a sense that there is one truth, one story that would be told in exactly the same way to every person that might ask the questions, or even that the experiences of the day might not impact on the way that

the story was told. It is for this reason that the relationship between the two interlocutors, the place, the time and the assumed shared understandings are important.

Knowledge and truth from the interview then, cannot be classed as stand-alone, and will vary according to who is being addressed. This means that knowledge is not complete and that it is contextual. My thesis could not be replicated, even if a different person were to interview the same people, as the interviews are co-constructions. The stories that I am told are formed because the interview is relational, and it is based on this relationship that the participants choose to address me. My questions, the words that I use, the atmosphere that I create have a direct impact on the way the story is told, and the story is also made up of the way that the participant wants to come across. The story I am told is constructed for me and with me, based on past experiences, and past stories that have been told and retold by the teacher but also in light of the interview situation.

Understandings are based on the stories that people tell themselves and others about who they are (Holland et al., 2001: 3), who they want to be and who they want others to think that they are. This means that knowledge is partial, but it also means that the complexity of being human and living a social existence can be explored if the tools of analysis can be found.

These tools for analysis are integral to this thesis as they offer a way to respond to Ball's depiction of what it means to be a teacher working within a performative discourse.

Through using these tools, I have reframed my research questions to ask:

- How does the teacher describe their lived experience of working in a secondary school sixteen years after “The Teacher’s Soul and The Terrors of Performativity” was published?
- How do teachers develop their professional identities at the interface of potentially competing personal and professional discourses?
- Where, along the margins and interstices of the performative discourse, how and with what difficulties, do teachers choose how to act?
- In what ways do teachers describe how performative discourses and practices position them, and do they also provide teachers with the resources to respond?

If it is assumed that there are spaces along the margins and interstices of discourses and practices for human agency, then the teacher is no longer tied to making binary choices. What can be explored instead, within the stories that are told and the discourses that they describe, are the spaces that teachers find to act or figure things differently. This then places the potential to appropriate, resist, reject and to form identities within the performative discourse as the focus of the study. The theoretical framework offers tools to understand how performativity impacts on the characters in the story, but it also offers tools to understand how they in turn also impact on the discourse.

## 4.6 Research Design and Methods

### 4.6.1 The interview

I have already discussed how I would be using interviews so that the participants could tell their own story. I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2014: 150) to guide the conversation and also to follow a more natural line of conversation. The interview is “a dialogic space” (Braathe and Solomon, 2014: 152) where “interlocutors draw on past, present and future meanings in a heteroglossic, multi-voiced space of communication” (Braathe and Solomon, 2014: 152). The voices of the interviewer and the interviewee mingle with the voices that are also brought into the conversation as part of the stories that are being told. As the theoretical framework used in this thesis is based on the premise that the stories that people tell themselves and others are self-understandings that can be referred to as identities (Holland et al., 2001: 3) then these “interview accounts ... need to be understood as a part of an ongoing emergent self, co-constructions of a narrative of choice between the interviewer and interviewee” (Braathe and Solomon, 2014: 152).

### 4.6.2 The Participants

I had certain criteria for choosing the participants. They needed to have been teaching for at least five years in the secondary school sector so that they had had time to develop a professional, authoritative voice and to have experienced educational reform as change.

My aim had been to find ‘the happy teacher’, which could be considered the “path of optimism” (Holland et al., 2003: 64) that I had been attracted in the theoretical framework.

At the time of the interviews, I had been hoping to see the spaces for agency that teachers are able to find in order to author themselves as enjoying their role. On reflection, I was also trying to rationalise my choice to leave the classroom and persuade myself, that those who were left behind (and therefore teaching my own children) were not unhappy in the way that I had become in the stories that I have described so far. I did not anticipate the three diverse stories that seem to fortuitously link to Ball's paper and it is perhaps for this reason that I found the process of analysing them so emotive.

I did not interview past or current students of mine, but I did know all three participants in a professional and / or personal capacity. They all knew me as a secondary school teacher, and I had previously had a number of non-research related conversations with each participant about what it felt like to be a teacher. In the interview I did not position myself as a researcher, rather as someone who had recently changed jobs and was continuing with my studies, and this was reflected in the interview, which was constructed along the lines of a social interaction, rather than a formal interview.

Stephanie, 52 is a Head of Mathematics in an 11-16 mixed comprehensive school in the North West of England. She had been teaching for 28 years at the time of the interview, and had been teaching at her current school, Waterside for 12 years. Our interview took place mid-week in a bistro style café.

Sarah is an Assistant Headteacher at an 11-16 mixed comprehensive school in the North-West of England. She had been teaching at Pegai High for eleven years at the time of the



interview. This was her first teaching position. Sarah has experience of other schools as she is a Specialist Leader in Education (SLE). This means visiting schools that are identified by Ofsted as “require[ing] improvement” or “inadequate” to help them to improve. Our interview took place on a Friday night in her home.

Jasmine was a part-time Art teacher in a secondary mixed, 11-16 comprehensive school in the North West of England at the time of the interview. She had secured a new post in a primary school as a cover lesson Art teacher a few weeks prior to the interview. She had been teaching for more than 15 years. Our interview took place at my home on a Friday morning.

#### 4.6.3 Guiding Questions

At the start of each interview I placed a quite tatty piece of paper on the table with handwritten bullet points of ideas to guide the conversation. On occasions, I, they or we both looked over to see what we had covered and what else we might talk about. The participants were able to choose which points to answer and the order of the themes that we covered, and I feel that the informality of the notes made them feel less prescriptive. Each interview started with “What does being a teacher feel like to you right now” and from there on, the conversation flowed. These notes, which were positioned near enough to reach but not close enough to direct the conversation were:

- What does being a teacher feel like to you right now?
- Good bits?

- Bad bits?
- How was it at first?
- Better / worse now?
- What would you keep / change?

These guides allowed the participants to talk about their experience of being a teacher, both positive and negative, and to contextualise their story in the past and the future. The concept of performativity was not written into the questions and I did not broach this as a topic. In order to answer my research questions, I wanted to see how and if performativity would appear in the conversation, in order to see how they respond to it. How teachers address performativity offers spaces to see how they author themselves with it.

#### 4.7 Analytical Framework

I have used concepts taken from the theoretical framework as tools to analyse each story. Some of these tools have proven more useful to analyse one participant than another, but these threads have been pulled together in the discussion. These are:

- Heteroglossia
- Dialogism
- Addressivity
- The Space of Authoring
- History-in-person
- Authoritative Discourse
- Internally Persuasive Discourse
- Appropriation, Resistance, Rejection and Rupture
- Co-development
- Positionality
- Identity
- Agency
- The Figured World of the School (including figurative identities, characters and its discourse).

Each story has been analysed separately, exploring how the teacher presents the figured world of the school and their position within it. It explores aspects of the particular school's authoritative discourse, how it is portrayed as sitting within the wider performative discourse, and how this is addressed by the teacher's internally persuasive discourse. I look at the figurative identity of the good teacher within the school, and how this is described by the participants. Do they fit this image? Does it fit with their internally persuasive discourse of what a good teacher and/or leader is, and are there any tensions?

Each participant describes how they are positioned by others. This is particular to the figured world of the school and the positional identity that is offered, whether appropriated, resisted or rejected, is considered within the participant's school structure. The way that the performative discourse can impact on how teachers are positioned as well as how they can choose to position themselves is considered in terms of access. It is in this area that heteroglossia and the space of authoring are most apparent. Positionality is an important area in the analysis and discussion chapters as:

*Perspectives are tied to a sense of entitlement or disentitlement to the particular spaces, relationships, activities, and forms of expression that together make up the indices of identity (Holland et al., 2001: 44).*

"Self-understandings" are seen as "identities" (Holland et al., 2001: 3) where "position is not fate" (Holland et al., 2001: 45) but "people look at the world from the positions into which they are persistently cast" (Holland et al., 2001: 44). Therefore, this theoretical framework opens spaces to analyse how position affects the way that the participants experience being a teacher, and the potential to co-develop their position, or at least to try.

The analysis looks at how each participant tells their story in terms of their position within the school and if they have looked for interstices available to them in order to hold a position that they identify with. This refers to the way that they figured their identity at the beginning of their career, as well as how they experience it now.

The analysis uses the theoretical tools noted above to look at how:

*specific, often socially powerful, cultural discourses and practices both position people and provide them with the resources to respond to the problematic situations in which they find themselves* (Holland et al., 2001: 32).

Rather than see the teacher as bound by discourse, the analytical framework opens up ways to explore how they use this discourse, working with it, and addressing it directly so that they are “developing at an interface” (Holland et al., 2001: 32). I have looked specifically for the performative discourse in these stories, but I have also noted where other dominant discourses stand out for each teacher in the study.

The analytic framework is then used to explore key themes in the three narratives and to draw them together. I discuss the interplay of positionality, internally persuasive discourses and other authoritative discourses on what it means to be a teacher. These three narratives offer some understanding of the lived experience of being a teacher, how professional identities are formed (and forming) within the performative discourse and where along the margins and interstices of this and other discourses they choose how to act. They also offer a way to consider if teachers are faced with binary choices, and how and if they may choose to react to them.

## 4.8 Ethical Considerations

In order to conduct this piece of research I have read and reflected on the British Educational Research Association's ethical guidelines (BERA, 2018). Participants were invited to take part and were informed of the purposes of the study before formally consenting. They were also informed that they were able to withdraw at any time. All participants were able to choose where we met, with neutral spaces offered, and they were invited to read the transcript of the interview and make changes if they felt that what they had intended to say had been misinterpreted. After careful consideration, I have decided not to share my interpretation of their stories with them as, particularly in the case of Stephanie, I found her story and chapter an emotional one. The analysis captures only the moment in time, and I would not like to return her to this point of uncertainty and feeling "not that good" if she has moved on from this point to a more positive place.

All participants names have been changed, as have the names of the schools where they work and the people that they refer to. On occasion I have also changed genders of people who are referred to in their stories, to further anonymise the data. All recordings were kept in a locked drawer and the transcripts of the interviews were kept on a password encrypted computer, even though the names were changed during transcription.

I do not work with any of the participants, and I did not choose to use current or former students, therefore I was not in any official position of power over the participants. That does not mean ethical issues of power at play were absent from this study. Ethical

guidelines are not just about meeting standard ethical guidelines and filling in forms, (Clandinin, 2006: 52) and ethical considerations when interviewing people I know, about a topic “dear to my heart” go beyond the “procedural” (Downs, 2017: 459). The need to question how I used the stories I collected; the impact that this might have on the relationships that we already had and how to place the stories in the context of educational reform are also ethical considerations.

From a dialogic point of view, the interview must be considered as an event (Bakhtin, 1981) where the interviewee and interviewer are not entirely separate, and the conversation has an impact on both. This is something that takes place before, during and after the event. The environment, the questions and the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee are important to the way that the interview is perceived and how the conversation takes place. Furthermore, these interviews are snapshots or freeze-frames of the self-in-practice and they therefore represent the participants on the day of the interview. Their identities are not fixed and they continue to answer and address the world that they are living in, so that the interview can only represent how they saw themselves and the world on that day. Certain voices might have been more prominent than others, a work or personal discourse might have been elevated that is normally not afforded as much reflection, but this shows the changing nature of being a teacher and therefore the snapshot, whilst not defining the participants does give insight into how being a teacher is experienced.

I chose not to conduct the interviews at the university, in part to make it easier for the participants, and in part because this added to the formality of the conversation being a part of a doctoral thesis. We met at places that were convenient and inviting to the participant. Ideally, I hoped for the interview to feel as comfortable and natural as possible, and as I knew the participants well, I left the decision of where to meet with them.

There is a possibility that the interview with Jasmine that took place in my kitchen was influenced by my surroundings, but there was no obvious previous power relationship as we had not worked together and we know each other socially, so the setting felt natural. For me the least comfortable setting was the interview in Sarah's home that I had not previously visited. I was more conscious of imposing on her time and space, and this may have impacted on the length of the interview and how much I probed. The most neutral space for an interview was in a café. This meant that the conversation took place in a social setting where the potential for others to hear and see us was greater. Despite the fact that no-one sat near us, it is possible that Stephanie adapted her story and gave less information due to this more open forum.

The time of day that the participants were interviewed may have also impacted on the stories told. Stephanie arrived at the end of a long and what she described as very bad day at work. I met Sarah at 6pm on a Friday evening which, as she works full-time, might have impacted on how she felt and the story that she told. Jasmine and I met on her day off from work. When the interview is considered as a snapshot, these factors can be considered as adding to heteroglossia, rather than potential impediments to finding a truth as regardless

of the time and place, they chose to tell me a specific story, and they read through the transcript later. Whilst all three were offered an opportunity to alter or redact things that they had said none of them chose to do so.

The issues faced with asking people to tell personal stories is that I need to analyse them objectively as data. I had not considered how personal and honest their accounts would be, and the trust they placed in me to capture their stories and make meaning from them in an academic document. Ethically I needed to consider how I portray the participants so that I do not valorise or romanticise them (Downs, 2017: 464), but also that this trust is respected. Similarly, I have had to ensure the same caution with my own narrative that runs through this piece of writing. The use of theory has helped me to distance myself from my relationship with the participants, and to notice where and how we co-construct the stories that are told. The presence of the dictaphone and the questions, albeit written informally on a piece of paper were perhaps restrictive, but on an ethical level, I feel that these were important artefacts in the interview as they were reminders of the formality of the conversation and its purpose.

This chapter has explored the methodological, theoretical and ethical considerations that have led to the following data analysis chapters. It has explicitly laid out the tools which I have taken from the theoretical framework to conduct this study, and in particular how they have helped me to form an analytic framework to answer my research questions.



# 5 Analysis 1: The Crab Bucket

## 5.1 It wasn't just one bad day

Stephanie arrived late. She looked tired and flustered and told me that she had had a terrible day. I was cautious of conducting a 'bad day' interview, but the conversation revealed that this was not just one bad day. Stephanie's story is told frankly and uses vivid metaphors, but her story is a reluctant one. It is clear that she would like to tell a different story, as in this one she is questioning her ability as a teacher and looking for reassurances that she is doing a good job. In this sense it was a difficult interview: I wanted to reassure her, and in different circumstances might have been able to do so, but in this one, I was aware that I was yet another person who could not offer her this support.

The structure of this chapter follows, in the main, the natural line of the conversation. This is because there is a cadence to the story, that I would like to recapture in this chapter, showing inner struggles and resistance of the story itself, or at least of the way that she is positioned within it.

## 5.2 Powerlessness: "there's an awful lot on my shoulders"

Stephanie starts by placing her current mood alongside most teachers. She starts with:

*I think if you spoke to anybody then they would say they're feeling sort of  
low*

This gives a sense of the norm, and places her within it, until she expands and states:

*But I feel particularly low at the moment. I feel quite frustrated and I feel as though there's an awful lot on my shoulders as a Head of Department and particularly as a Head of Maths*

Stephanie's story points straight towards the performative discourse and external pressures on schools. In particular, she leads with the shift in priority of who good examination results are for:

*I think we've always had, I've always wanted the results to be good for the kids, but there's more pressure now that it's more for the school and ... less for the children, much more for how the school looks.*

This is the first reason that Stephanie gives for feeling low and frustrated. The issue of work pressure being linked to how the school is perceived, rather than the achievements of the pupils, recurs throughout her story.

Stephanie returns to the pressures of being a Head of Department (HoD) frequently within the conversation, and she also refers to the rewards and pressures of this role throughout with reference to workload, recognition and relationships. These themes are interrelated, showing the complexity of her role, and of the ways that she is figuring her identity as a teacher and HoD in relation to them.

Stephanie tries to place herself alongside other teachers and positions herself as in a similar position, but perhaps feeling a little more low, and a little more frustrated. In order to clarify why, she describes her team. She describes this team as mainly inexperienced, with a

new second in department who still needs a lot of guidance. She has two experienced members of staff, but one is currently on long-term sickness leave, and being covered by a “hard-working” supply teacher. “However, he’s not staying, and that tells me something that he’s not staying after the summer”. The issue for Stephanie is that this:

*Doesn’t seem to have been questioned by senior management as to why a supply teacher with the support that I’ve given him, doesn’t want to stay for another term [Pause].*

This lack of SLT questioning is portrayed as important, and at this early stage in the interview she lets it hang in the air. Stephanie alludes to a dissatisfaction with the SLT but it is only later that the term “support” is revealed as key factor in the dissatisfaction that she feels.

### 5.3 Being Viewed: “A row of Smiling Faces Watching You”

I summarised the feeling of being a HoD by saying ‘So it doesn’t feel good?’ and Stephanie tries to move this along, to find a positive saying:

*It doesn’t feel good right now. That aspect doesn’t feel good right now. However, in the classroom, even after all these years, I haven’t lost my mojo in there, at times.*

The “at times” is telling. The aim to tell me of a positive experience is overcome quickly by the more present sense of what the classroom is like for her now:

*But it’s much more infrequently that I have good classes and good lessons erm, and I find that really, really frustrating and I feel that ... erm... I’ve lowered my expectations...*

Stephanie describes a contrasts between her Key Stage Three (KS3) and Key Stage Four (KS4) classes. She discusses this in terms of relationships and how she is seen by the group as a whole. In KS4 she says, *“I think they see that I work hard for them and that I’ll do absolutely anything to get them the best grade they possibly can get.”* Whereas in KS3 *“That relationship is not there... They don’t see me as someone who can help them. They see me as a hindrance.”*

Stephanie describes what the more difficult classes feel like at Waterside school. This varies from pupils challenging school rules through not complying with school uniform to pupils walking out of a lesson without permission and returning, complaining that the lesson has moved on and blaming Stephanie, saying *“you never help me!”*. Stephanie describes *“a significant number of children watching you”*, linking challenging behaviour to the feeling of children watching her to see how she will respond.

*Again, I keep repeating myself, but it’s this people looking to see how you’re going to respond, because they’re looking for this chink of weakness... is she... is she one of the weak ones? And children pick up on this. Is she going to do something about it, or is that something else we can get her on later?*

The children are seen as a body watching her. She is experiencing the panopticon (Foucault, 1977:217) in her classroom, but through the eyes of the pupils rather than the eyes of the SLT. Throughout the interview, Stephanie tries to reposition the children as the most important consideration in her role, but here there is something sinister in the way that she describes them. Perhaps this is indicative of the relationship that she feels *“is not there”* in

her KS3 classes and the way that she believes that they don't see her "*as someone who can help them*".

*Claire: So, you are viewed from all sides?*

*Stephanie: yeah. And... and... and quite happily, quite happily, if I was to get into an argument, although I try very hard not to, if I was to get into an argument, you see, and it does sound awful, because it is awful, a row of smiling faces as they sit there grinning that you've been sucked into this argument, and this confrontation, that they're quite happy for, to have with you.*

Stephanie struggles not only with the awful sense of pupils enjoying her mistakes; but also that she does occasionally allow herself to enter into confrontation. There is a real sense that she is self-regulating by using the row of faces who are:

*Watching to see how you will respond to this... and sometimes I don't respond and that annoys me, and it frustrates me... and I feel as though I should respond to it...*

As Stephanie's expectations are lowered, she is not the teacher she wants to be. When she chooses to "*tactically ignore things that in the past I wouldn't have ignored*" she is potentially too invested, too aware of the faces, too aware of having accepted what for her should have been unacceptable before she responds. She is defending not only the boundary that she believes in, such as carrying on her lesson whilst a pupil leaves the room without permission, but also the boundary of being the figure of authority in the room, and proving to the pupils, and to herself that she is not one of the weak ones. The perception of herself as a teacher that she projects onto the pupils is the one she is projecting onto

herself. Stephanie is also watching herself perform through the eyes of the pupils; she is judging herself in a negative light as she does so.

#### 5.4 Positionality: “So, I know my place”

There are times when Stephanie shows that she is willing to resist the way that she is being positioned by others: to challenge figures of power in her school, and the experience of those in authority making decisions that affect her, or seem to define her. This is illustrated when she challenges the way that data is used, and the way that promotions, in her opinion, are given rather than earned. For her these are interlinked and emotionally charged. She introduces this by describing how the new Assistant Headteacher of Assessment and Data has introduced a way of assessing progress that Stephanie does not agree with:

*This year I mean, it's just laughable, but this year we've had to predict what these children are going to get five times this year ... So, we've had to predict what they're going to get [Pause].*

The pause is important. She wanted me to respond, and I too am supposed to find this laughable.

*Claire: five times?*

*Stephanie: yeah, five times ... so, if you were in my year 11 class, Claire, I would have to predict what I think you're going to get in the summer.*

Stephanie claims authority quickly as she ridicules the practice. She places me in her story, so that I can feel the impact of it directly on me.

*If I think that you're going to get a five... then that's not going to change is it? Because that's what I think that you're going to get. You currently might be on a two, Claire, but if all I'm putting in is that I think you're going to get a five... it just stays at a five, doesn't it? And actually, you can't tell whether there's any progress towards that five, because you're not putting anything in to show current. Where, if you're a two in September and I predict you a five, and you're a three in November, and I predict you a five, then obviously what I'm doing with you, Claire it's working, isn't it?"*

Stephanie is very confident when talking about the data that the school uses to track its pupils and teachers and shows no resistance to it. Rather, she is resisting the way the data is collected, but also resisting the authority of the person in this role. She states that there are:

*People who have been placed in jobs that they are not actually qualified for, they haven't got the experience for... and that's happened quite a bit and I am a bit bitter about it because there are a number of people on the SLT that have just been given their jobs, that have not been interviewed and that their face has fitted.*

In the past, Stephanie had felt positioned as someone whose face did not fit, and she had complained to the previous headteacher about Assistant Headteacher roles being given without advertisement or interview.

*When I said it to the previous head, he didn't speak to me for the next six months.*

*[Pause]*

*So, I know my place.*

In the Figured World of a successful teacher, Stephanie's story might include applying for and being appointed as an Assistant Headteacher, but this opportunity has not been

presented to her in her current school. Stephanie makes a claim for this opportunity when she speaks to the Headteacher, and she reveals that she was angry when she tells me *“it’s not repeatable what I said”*. She sees her relative position in the school as entitling her to apply for these roles or negotiating this lack of opportunity, and instead finds herself disqualified. There is a rupture between Stephanie’s figurative identity and positional identity in this exchange.

The possibility of change occurred with a new Headteacher so that Stephanie thought:

*Yes! Somebody with some fresh eyes, you know, a new way of looking at it.*

The figure of the new Headteacher who would look at things differently, allowed Stephanie to reconsider her positional identity. She therefore believed that when the Assistant Headteacher of Assessment and Data role was internally advertised that she would be able to apply for it. But:

*The job description came out and it specified certain things, which was great but the person who’d been shadowing Sam all year had been doing all those things...*

The job description figured Stephanie as someone without the relevant experience, and Stephanie here positions herself as someone who was not given the opportunity to gain that experience.

*There wasn’t anything along the lines of ‘if anyone’s interested in what Sam does, shadow him. You could come to this meeting, he could talk you through this’*



The job description had been a symbol of change, but it became instead a symbol of how she had again been positioned as not being Assistant Headteacher material.

*When I read it, I had no experience of those things. I could bullshit my way through an interview about it, 'cause it's data, and stuff like that, but actually the bottom line was that I didn't have any experience*

Stephanie only swears once in this interview, which is significant as it represents strong emotion, a sense of injustice and a potential for rupture. She feels that she has been overlooked for a role that she felt qualified for and that she was actively positioned as someone without experience, in order to position someone else as more appropriate for the job. She makes this claim when she criticises the way that this new Assistant Head is collecting data; when she says that some people are “*given roles they not actually qualified for*” and when she reads the job description considering applying for this role. There is a new headteacher, but things have not changed in the way that she had hoped and she is again excluded. She qualifies her dissatisfaction with how other figures in the school reacted:

*And so, it was that it was quite a joke in the staff room that it had somebody's name all over it, which ... effectively.. she should have just given it to him...*

Her position in the school is re-enforced as someone who will not be promoted. She uses other figures in the school to show that there was a consensus that this was not a fair process. She places a value judgement on the process through these other figures, to support why she is “*a bit bitter about it*”. What Stephanie does not do however, is use these figures to bolster her. She did not apply for the role, and the staff room joke that there was

someone else's name on the job description may also play a part in that. Both the figures that wrote the job description and those that laughed about it all positioned someone else in that role.

### 5.5 "There are times when I actually don't think that I'm that good"

The performative / administrative aspects of the Stephanie's role do not seem to have the same emotional effects on her as being excluded from the SLT.

Stephanie describes a new extra pressure of "*weekly meetings... with my link manager*" where she is given "*jobs ... for this week*". These do not seem to be particular to Stephanie, and are in keeping with a change in headteacher and greater school self-regulation tasks required for the new Ofsted inspections (Allen and Sims, 2018: 94). Stephanie is critical of these tasks, stating that:

*We're given things to do, but actually there's very few deadlines and I've often chosen the wrong things to do and then got my hand slapped because I should have known that those were more important*

The term hand slapped is something that alludes to being told off, but without serious consequences. Unlike the 'awfulness' of the classroom when the eyes are watching her, Stephanie does not seem to hold the same value to the link manager meeting lists, or to the 'hand slap' when she is chastised. She follows on from this comment saying:

*But... the classroom, it still works for me at times and when you think about it, Claire, I've been, this is my twenty-eighth year, and I have had opportunities to go up the ladder and to get... and the bit that I don't want*

*to lose is in the classroom, because I do think that I make a difference...  
and that's what keeps me going.*

Stephanie may not have taken previous opportunities to “move up the ladder”, but as she is now not getting those opportunities, she does not have a voice in how she shaped her role. Stephanie may once have felt valued and made decisions based on professional judgement, but she wants a say in how students are tracked and in choosing which tasks are important and she does not have this. In being positioned outside of the SLT, she is positioned as someone who cannot contribute to the school beyond the classroom. This is a site of tension, particularly as there are issues with the way that she is experiencing the “gaze” in the classroom.

*However, it's getting le... the light is diminishing every year (half laughs)  
sort of thing. It's not... it's not as bright as it was, and I do wrestle with  
myself, as to whether it would be different in another school and whether  
it is something to do with the environment that I'm in now... but I, I do  
wrestle with the fact that I'm fifty two now, and erm... who would employ  
me...?*

This is the point in her story where she questions if Waterside is part of the reason why she is getting less enjoyment from her role. Whilst at times she will resist some performative tasks, or the way that she is positioned, it is this position in the school, which is affecting her confidence. When coupled with her age, this lack of confidence can make Stephanie feel quite trapped.

*I do think at times that the environment that I've been in, that it has been  
quite negative and quite draining... there are times when I actually don't  
think that I'm that good, Claire*

There is something intimate in the use of my name, that makes me think of it as reaching out over the table to me and touching my hand to make sure that I am listening. This is the point where she opens up her story, to talk more openly about her frustrations and battles and to allow herself to share moments when she has felt vulnerable.

Within Stephanie's figured world of the school, she is starting to form an unwanted professional identity, as a teacher with classes that do not behave well for her, managers who criticise the way that she approaches tasks, and whose face does not fit. To counter this, she resists by looking outside of the school environment.

*I don't actually think that I'm that good and it's only when I go to other places and I make a point of going...*

This is Stephanie showing agency, and looking for the interstices to figure things differently. She is reclaiming the power to create knowledge about what sort of teacher she is, and she does this by attending "voluntary CPD" sessions. These bolster her as:

*When I start to join in, and people are going 'ooh, that's a good point she's made' 'ooh that...' and I think, 'yeah, I am not that bad really, I do know what I'm talking about'*

Stephanie is adding voices to the ones that she hears at Waterside, and these allow different inner dialogues. Rather than undoing her old answers of her being a good teacher, they are re-enforcing them. Stephanie seeks out different "social relations and material conditions" (Holland et al., 2001: 189) in order to author herself differently and she also draws on her history-in-person to resist the fossilisation of an identity as a "not good

enough” to be promoted teacher. The new voices support previous inner voices, so that she can conduct a richer heteroglossic inner dialogue, and self-author in a way that challenges her current figured world. She seeks out opportunities for praise in order to believe in herself as a teacher and Head of Department.

*Stephanie: But I have to take myself out of Waterside in order for me to ... feel that way... do you understand what I mean?*

*Claire: because you're not getting it there?*

*Stephanie: yeah, not getting it there. That's right, yeah, I'm not getting it there.*

The stronger narrative for Stephanie is the “*not that good*” position that she is forming in the figured world of the school. She hears and therefore needs to address the voices within her current school more frequently than the ones that she seeks out in her occasional visits outside Waterside. Perhaps these outings are actually Stephanie ‘playing’ at being a good teacher, disrupting the discourse and figuring herself otherwise for short spaces of time, but not yet long enough to make permanent move away from Waterside. She says:

*I've looked at jobs, I always look at jobs, but I always think to myself I'm not good enough to do that... they want somebody better than I am. So, I've looked at Assistant Head jobs in other school, I've looked at Heads of Maths jobs in other schools that have had a whole school sort of responsibility with them, so it would be a promotion. But I've talked myself out of them, because I don't think I'm good enough... and I've done that... I've done that loads of time. Loads of times.*

Stephanie is trying to resist being positioned as not good enough by others, but here she appropriates it. She has not liberated herself from the authority of the school's discourse (Holland et al., 2001: 183) and is caught up in the struggle to resist it. The margins and

interstices to act differently, or to position herself differently that she finds outside of school, or in her KS4 classes, are not experienced often enough to counter the orchestration of voices, that tell her that “*they want somebody better than I am*”. Despite her resistance, she is starting to co-develop her identity with how she is currently positioned as she has not yet experienced or created a rupture to reject these voices. This has however happened in the past.

In Stephanie’s previous school she had been a Head of Year and applied for the role of Head of Department in Maths, but it was given to someone else.

*I basically helped her run that department in that year, because she wasn’t up to speed, and I begrudgingly did it... and I think... deep down I thought ‘I can do this, so I’m going to go and do it somewhere else.’*

In not being given the role and seeing that the “*somebody else*” that they wanted struggled with the role and needed her help, she found a space to author herself as not only capable, but more capable. She says:

*I just thought I can do this, they’re wrong not to have given me this job, that job. I could’ve done that job, but actually they’ve got somebody that is struggling, and that I’ve supported, and ... that’s when I applied for the job at Waterside*

In direct contrast to her current voice telling her that she is not good enough, this voice is defiant. There is a rupture where she uses the situation to create change. As Stephanie is forced to support the new HoD and objectify herself as a successful Head of Maths, the

position becomes something that she can make a claim to, and she decides to do this elsewhere.

This previous story is particularly pertinent to Stephanie's disappointment in not feeling able to apply for the Assistant Head role. She has resisted the new systems introduced by the person who she felt was unfairly given an advantage over her in gaining experience in the role, as she feels her knowledge base in data analysis is stronger. She has felt powerless and unheard as she has tried to explain how she feels things ought to be done, but this also means that she could not reposition herself as more able. Her "advice" has not been accepted, and this has led to uncertainty, where she finds herself both resisting and appropriating her position of "not good enough", whilst still believing that she could do things better.

In the past, rejecting the "not good enough" position was a positive experience for Stephanie. It was a hard-won standpoint, and her claim to this role was substantiated. Furthermore, the staff in the Maths department, at Waterside, her then new school "*had a lot of experience*" and she was recognised as being good in her new role. She recalls how one member of the department:

*Wrote me a Christmas card, the first Christmas that I was there, and she put 'To Stephanie, a brilliant breath of fresh air, Love Jackie' ... And that was just a massive pat on the back for me...*

Again, Stephanie struggles to tell a story that does not relate to how low she is feeling at and she pulls herself back down:

*...and you know, the fact that I can remember that, and I can remember the exact words? ...*

*I can't remember any one since then, Claire. You know, cards, or comments along those lines.*

There is direct link to the feelings of frustration and the desire to disrupt the position that Stephanie was in at her old school, where she was not offered the role that she aspired to, and the situation that she is in now. This history-in-person is important to the story that Stephanie is telling, and also important to the way that she figures her identity within the school that was once such a positive place for her. The last time that Stephanie felt like this, she made changes that were positive. She was able to self-author as a Head of Maths and attain this role working with the previous HoD at Waterside had been promoted, but remained at the school. Rather than finding herself in a positional battle, the previous HoD is an important figure in her story as:

*I worked alongside him and I supported him, and he supported me*

This seems to be important to Stephanie, as being supported is not a part of her current story.

Stephanie notes that this positive time at Waterside was limited as:

*Just general things within Education that came in. Like, we probably had a new specification come in, because we've had so many. Coursework went, I think... erm the A\* to C thing came in. All those external pressures...*



This is another point where she places performativity and educational reform as a backdrop to her own story. Even when she looks back to a brighter time, the performative and external pressures were there. Perhaps what is interesting is that in this 'golden period' story she felt that this was approached more as a team so that the pressure was shared rather than on her alone. This is very different to the way that she describes her current situation.

*You know it doesn't feel great, because there's an awful lot of internal pressure, but there's still a massive external pressure: changing the GCSE; the 1-9 grading, you know? Kids are sitting examinations that we don't even know what a pass is going to be. All those kind of unknowns...*

Stephanie describes the pressure of having “*an inexperienced department looking to me for the answers*” when she feels that she does not have them and her sense of powerlessness.

*I would just like to have a period where I feel a little bit more in control and that I've got some answers, and that would give me security*

This lack of control and certainty is important to the way that she describes herself and the figurative role she plays for her team. She talks about herself in the third person to show how the voices of the teachers in her department position her as a knowledgeable figure, which counters the way that she feels.

*So, what shall we tell the children? Is it a pass or isn't it a pass? And I walk around the corridors and I hear them say 'Mrs Baker says...' and they might be sort of deflecting away from them, but that's actually quite a lot of pressure on me... Because what if Mrs Baker isn't right? Because she doesn't know what's going to happen in the summer*

This figurative identity is important, as it is one that she holds as her history-in-person. She describes how she used to predict the grade percentage and how she had “*got it down to a T*”, stating that:

*I think we had three years on the bounce where I predicted and I was spot on, what I predicted*

This shows a very confident Head of Maths who knew exactly how well her cohort would do in their GCSE examinations. She contrasts this past identity, as a competent teacher and HoD, to her current situation:

*I haven't got a clue what our percentage will be in the summer... I don't know which children will get it or which children won't get it. And I've had some really sleepless nights about that...*

Stephanie has full ownership of the decisions that she has made. There is not the sense of someone who is working as a team and sharing the lack of security in this part of the conversation, rather she is:

*Worrying whether I've done the right thing; I've picked the right exam board; I've guided people to do the right interventions; that I've made up these boundaries that I think are going to be around or whether I'm completely out, you know...*

Stephanie is carrying the weight of these decisions, even though she is positioned or positions herself as a Head of Maths who has the answers. She draws on past experience and uses it to figure herself to others in order to support her department and their pupils. Educational reform is a part of how Stephanie forms her professional identity, and it is creating uncertainty that supports her fear that she may not be good enough.

## 5.6 The Crab Bucket

At the beginning of her story, Stephanie described what she felt was a lowering of standards and expectations of pupils, and how this affected the way that she, and the pupils saw her(self) as a teacher. When I asked why they were important, she looks away from the classroom to the children she teaches.

*I think the nature of the children that we've got, one of the best things that we can do is get them ready for life beyond school, and I don't think that we do that because we allow them to not come to school; we allow them to arrive late; we allow them not to wear a uniform; we allow them to not care, not aspire...*

Stephanie creates an “us” and “them” scenario with a body of children and a body of adults and presents these standards and expectations as a way to help children to aspire for something after they have left school.

*Erm it's a bit like, this is my Billy's, I better give him credit, he reckons that the area that a lot of these children come from is a little bit like a crab bucket, and that there's the odd one or two trying to crawl out but as soon as they get to the top, somebody pulls them back in again and there's this element of 'you can't do better than this town, you can't do better than the neighbouring town, and that everything is within that 3 mile radius... and that aspiration needs to be much more. They don't aspire enough.*

This resonated very closely with everything that Stephanie had said so far. It seemed to describe more than the children in her school, and I offered the application to her:

*Claire: but you understand that though.*

*Stephanie: yeah. I do.*

*Claire: Not just for the pupils, but do you feel a bit like every time you get your head up, you ...*

*Stephanie: yeah, I feel every time I get there somebody pulls me back in somebody has a conversation with me or somebody gets wind I've looked at a job or that I'm thinking... you ... before the old head left I had about a month off, I was really quite ill, and I did actually think about just erm, giving in teaching. But ... it's the love of the job, and I'm not sure I could do anything else.*

This is part of the co-construction of the interview. I put the idea of Stephanie in the crab bucket forward as an idea and she appropriates it. There is no resistance, in fact, she assumes it and continues with it, describing herself in terms of confidence.

*I'm quite confident in a classroom, and I can, though actually I'm quite insecure at times, and I'm not sure if I could do anything else. I'm sure I could, but I don't feel as though, at the moment, just the way I am feeling, I don't feel as though I've got the confidence to take that plunge*

In Stephanie's case, unlike the children that she describes, there does not seem to be a lack of aspiration. In fact, it seems that aspiration is part of the reason that Stephanie feels so undervalued. She would have liked the opportunity to apply for Assistant Head roles that came up in her school, but instead she was positioned as "not good enough". Stephanie finds herself in a school where she can go no further. She is aware that this environment or bucket might be the reason why she feels trapped, but someone keeps pulling her back in. She climbs up the bucket, she looks for reassurance from external sources, she draws on past experience and she looks for it in the lessons from pupils that she teaches, but she doesn't find the confidence in herself to leave. The ups and downs that I described at the beginning of this chapter reflect Stephanie's journey up and down the crab bucket.

## 5.7 Positive figures

The reason that Stephanie became a teacher is linked to her O Level Maths teacher. This figure seems to influence the sort of teacher she wants to be.

*I really struggled at Maths at schools, and I had a really, really sort of dynamic teacher at O Level... who really believed in me and said, you know, you can do it and it was hard work, but I did... and then, I just fancied teaching, I just wanted to do that to others.*

What is important to Stephanie is the belief that this teacher had in her and the importance that she places on positive, supportive relationships. She describes the previous HoD, with whom she “worked together”, her “stalwart” who she can always rely on; Jackie who wrote her a Christmas card with a message that she has memorised and the supply teacher who she has supported but is still leaving. Stephanie also talks about two members of staff who have left for promotions:

*I worked really well with Luke and he’s gone on to be a Head of Department... I’d like to think that I had a little bit of an input in there, in the mentoring, and the support and the way we worked, that it gave him the confidence to apply for something and to go on and do that job. Similarly, with Jemima, I’d like to think that working at Waterside for a couple of years gave her the confidence to go and apply for this second in Maths that she got.*

The supportive environment and giving others confidence fits with the influential figure of the teacher that inspired Stephanie not only to study Maths, but also to become a teacher and to do the same for others, but she notes that:

*It's strange, because now I'm getting this opportunity to talk to you, here I am nurturing and supporting, but I actually don't feel nurtured myself. I don't feel supported myself*

Stephanie points towards the importance for her of an encouraging figure, and the impact that having, or not having this can have on a person in terms of confidence and self-belief.

She notes that:

*Here I am saying to Luke, yeah, you can be a second in department, you just need to do this, that and the other, yet personally when I look at myself, I think 'I can't be an Assistant Head, I can't do that'*

Stephanie positions the staff in her department as people who can apply for promotion, and she sees some become successful and leave due to this support. She does not describe a similar person offering this advice and support to her. She is positioned as someone whose face does not fit and who therefore cannot become an Assistant Headteacher at Waterside. She lacks a positive figure or mentor to help her to position herself differently.

Stephanie also describes a pupil as a positive figure.

*I couldn't teach them for some reason on Monday ... and today Jordan walked in and he went 'Thank Goodness you're here' and he said 'I don't know about anybody else but I think we're really lucky to have Mrs Baker, because that lesson was rubbish on Monday, and you're going to have to do it again today for us'*

From talking about a good teacher, Stephanie seems to remind herself that there are pupils who think that *she* is a good teacher, and she can move on to talk about doing for others what was once done for her.

*Stephanie: It was just a nice cosy feeling. You know when you come in after a walk and you have that hot chocolate and there was a nice cosy feeling there...*

*Claire: He welcomed you back in...*

*Stephanie: He did..*

*Claire: He made you feel wanted...*

*Stephanie: He made me feel wanted and actually, sometimes teachers need that. We need to feel as though we are wanted, and also it goes back to why I first got into teaching.. to make a difference. And I genuinely do feel that I am making a difference with Jordan.*

This is another point where we Stephanie and I co-construct the story together. She needs to feel that she is a good teacher who makes a difference. Jordan does this for her, he tells the whole class that they are lucky to have her, and he becomes a positive voice. He also adds greater complexity to Stephanie's entrapment in the crab bucket. She is trapped in there with the pupils and other members of staff, but she can make a difference and help them out. She can be the positive authority figure, that she is lacking, for others.

For Stephanie, the way that she is supported and supports others, particularly in times of educational reform has a great impact on how she identifies as a teacher. It would be easy to assume from this, that Stephanie is "one of the weak ones" or what Ball calls "in a weak market", but there is no evidence of this in her story. Instead, Stephanie feels unsupported and unvalued, and this affects her ability to story herself as "good enough". Even when she goes to voluntary training sessions and feels validated or that she "does actually know what she is talking about", feeling that she is positioned as not good enough for promotions makes her question herself. Stephanie notes that her lack of confidence may be due to her

environment, but it also keeps her there, so that she pops her head out of the crab bucket and looks around, but in being persuaded to stay, she feels just valued enough to resist finding out whether or not things might be better elsewhere.

The performative discourse and educational reform have a direct influence on how Stephanie identifies as a professional, but it is the relational and supportive aspect of the role that are important to her and how she stories herself. For Stephanie, there is a great deal of room for caring (Ball, 2003: 224) in her role as a teacher, and she also does not resist the performative discourse, or how it is used to measure if what she is doing is working. What Stephanie is resisting is her position in her school, and the glass ceiling that she has hit within it. Stephanie is positioned inside the bucket, and when she resists this, she climbs upwards, fighting for hard-won standpoints and calling upon previous experiences that remind her that she can figure her own identity differently. At these times she uses more positive external or remembered voices to make these climbs. Nevertheless, Stephanie has started to invest in the positional identity of not good enough and to appropriate it, so that she can only feel good “at times”. Without a nurturing authority figure telling her that she is good enough, and that she can do it, she is responding to the orchestration of voices that she hears and forming a professional identity that incorporates them all. Stephanie finds ways to resist and make the climb up the bucket, but would need someone with a very strong voice to help her jump out when there are so many other factors pulling her back in.



## 6 Analysis 2: I Keep Coming Back To This Fortunate Thing...

Sarah's story is one of feeling fortunate. She positions herself as "lucky" throughout the interview, partly because of the school she works in and partly because of the opportunities that she has been given throughout her life. She describes being fortunate as her outlook on life and that she is a "*glass half full person*".

Sarah's school is a major part of her story. Its status as 'outstanding', its management style to maintain this status and Sarah's opportunities for career advancement are used as an example of her good fortune. She often puts forward a position of good fortune on her part using a counter story to illustrate her point. For example, Sarah still enjoying her job despite feeling exhausted at the end of each day, "landing" in a school where she feels valued or going to a local independent school for free because she passed the 11+ exam. She positions these experiences against friends, family members and colleagues who are having or have had different, less positive experiences.

Sarah feels valued, which is important to her, and she also feels that she has agency within her understanding of the school's expectations. The stories that she hears from others reinforce her sense of being fortunate to have "landed in this school" and to have been kept on and promoted. Sarah's story is of being given opportunities, but she could also be considered as the "new hero manager" (Ball, 2003: 219) and the accomplished "neophyte" (Holland et al., 2001: 137). Sarah tells the story of what it means to be a teacher in the

“strong market” (Ball, 2003: 225) and therefore offers ways to consider whether values must necessarily be compromised in order to make a success of oneself. Sarah’s resistance to presenting herself as actively seeking out success is a part of her good fortune story, as are the new voices that she is hearing and responding to in her new role as an Assistant Headteacher.

### 6.1 “I think I feel, firstly, incredibly lucky to be able to teach”

Sarah sets her own experience within the current context of being a teacher. At the forefront of her mind when asked about her job is the workload:

*When someone asks me how my day was... it starts off with how busy I am, and how my feet hurt, and how I’m tired, and how I’ve still got some more work to do and, you know, my day is not over yet, and things like that.*

However, she places this into the context of why she finds this rewarding:

*But if I end up recounting interactions and experiences and achievements, there are so many each day, that I do actually feel incredibly lucky that I’m in a job that I really, really love, most of the time, and that not everybody has that*

Sarah’s doesn’t present teaching as easy, but she does present the rewards of human interaction. Luck is presented in terms of what these interactions, experiences and achievements offer her to counter the tiredness and workload and then in terms of how she is particularly lucky to feel this as a teacher.

It seems important that Sarah positions herself as fortunate to experience teaching as a job that she loves, particularly when others are not. She introduces the voice of her best friend as an illustration:

*So, we went to university together, we studied together ... we started to teach at the same time. She was an Assistant Head last year. She's just left teaching*

Sarah is also an Assistant Head, so in the same position in the school as her friend.

*but her story is so different to mine, and it's just where she ended up*

Her friend's story is still positioned as a story of chance, demonstrating Sarah's view that the school(s) where you "land" or "end up" are the luck of the draw and yet important factors in what your experience of being a teacher is. In doing so, Sarah presents her friend's school as a key factor in why she left. She goes on to state:

*And I just feel incredibly privileged, actually, to be where I am, and almost a little bit guilty, actually, sometimes. I get to go into the classroom and teach properly, and not firefight. And, you know, there are issues all the time, but I get to do the job that I envisaged it being, rather than something else.*

Sarah places her school as a reason for her good fortune. The way that she envisages or figures the school and teaching is important to her story, as is the story that she "landed" there.

## 6.2 "I do think it could have been different."

*I was born in Salford. My parents didn't have degrees. And my brother, by the time I was born, had been excluded from every single school he'd been*

*in, and wasn't really in school, when my twin sister and me were born. He was 12 ... so this is the world I was born into*

Sarah tells a story of being someone whose background meant that she might not make it through school, let alone become an Assistant Headteacher. Sarah describes how this began to change:

*And then my parents both went to university whilst we were at primary school... they did an Access course and got degrees. And they, sort of, had a bit of a change in their lifestyle around that time, which had a great impact on us*

For Sarah, education can have a positive impact on your lifestyle, and this is very much the story that she chooses to tell. The change in lifestyle included more parental choice for her education, so that the family “moved” and “decided to send us to a Catholic school because they had heard they were better than non-Catholic schools in that area”. This new area also had selective state secondary schools, so that Sarah and her twin sister

*Passed our 11-pluses, and we were able to go to an independent school, but other people were paying fees and we didn't. So, we had that opportunity, which was great*

Sarah's story is one of education positioning you differently, and of her parents making choices to make this happen. It is set against the backdrop of a brother who was excluded from school and being positioned alongside children whose parents chose to pay for their education. These decisions have had a long-lasting impact on Sarah, not only in her education, but also in her belief systems. The good fortune that Sarah stories herself with is a part of the decisions that were made for her, and Sarah tellingly states that “things could

have been different". Education is presented as offering Sarah the opportunities that she is grateful for, and she again compares herself to her friends from primary school who went on to the local catholic, secondary school:

*The alternative at the time was Saint Mary's ... and I've got friends who went there who didn't do as well*

Sarah's appropriation of the idea that she has been given the opportunity to do better due her parents' choices shows a belief that social positioning through the school that you attend can have an impact on you later in life. She does not consider that she might have done just as well in the Catholic school, or if they had remained in Salford, and shows a sense of good fortune and gratitude to her parents.

*And all of these things, I look back, and I think, 'So my classmates there didn't have parents who were motivated enough to go to university as mature students. And my parents there didn't have these opportunities and those opportunities.'*

This is the first chink in Sarah's good fortune story, as her gratitude to her parents also shows a different view of her parents' choices. They made active choices so that Sarah has been given opportunities that other children did not get. Education as a way to better yourself is very much wrapped up in the judgement here of the parents who did not better themselves and her "good fortune" to have parents who did. She has benefitted from their choices, but she seems very aware of them. There is a history-in-person that Sarah is tapping into about choice and this also creeps into our conversation about her "good fortune" at work

*I feel the same in school. I feel like I've been given an opportunity. I've worked hard once I've got it. I've got hold of the opportunity and done well with it, but I've been given that opportunity.*

This is a point where we can see the tension between the way that Sarah positions herself as lucky and her belief in hard work and agency. She has “got hold of” the opportunity by working hard, but it was “given” to her. I am not sure if Sarah feels that she has much choice but to “hold on” to her opportunities and take them. It seems that a lot of decisions were made when she was younger so that she could be lucky and that her part of the deal is that she accepts them and works hard. Sarah described her background when I asked if she aligned with the values of the school. I referred back to this by asking:

*Claire: So, when I say, “Do you align with the school?” you look at everything that your parents did to get you a good education?*

*Sarah: Yes, I feel, like, if there's a child who hasn't had the chances in life, they come to our school. Yes, it's strict. And, yes, what does it matter how low your haircut is? And what does it matter whether your shirt's tucked in or not? But, actually, in this world, it will matter, if you want to follow a quite straightforward path to academic success. And that's going to work. It's tried and tested, that if you tuck your shirt in, you know how to wear a uniform, you're respectful to people, and you don't wear a haircut that could associate you with some far-right groups. All of that means that you can be part of this culture, where everyone behaves in the same way, and that will make it easier for you to do well. I get that.*

Sarah's internally persuasive discourse (IPD) tells her that chances in life are offered in school, and that you need to accept them. At this point, she appropriates the school's authoritative discourse and uses it as an example of an easier path to success. Her personal story confirms this “tried and tested” path and she does not question it. She describes how you can become a part of this “academic success” culture, and in doing so,

she places conforming as a means of entry. This meeting of her IPD and the school's authoritative discourse of acceptable behaviour leads her to state:

*I understand that, if we all work as a team, and we all do the same thing, we can spend our time doing other things. So, I buy in to that, but I'm conscious of it. I'm conscious that there are some things there that are not, I know they are not important in themselves. I just know they're a part of what we do, and I know what we do is working*

This is Sarah storying herself within a collective, so that the figurative world of this particular school can offer opportunities to its pupils through high expectations. For Sarah, strict rules are a part of the authoritative discourse of this culture and appearing to conform to them is important. This is not just for the pupils, but the teachers who must all work together to create and maintain this culture.

### 6.3 "Anyone who is not fitting in with that culture...doesn't end up staying"

Initially, Sarah talks as an outsider to the senior leadership team referring to their walkabouts, which "happen all the time":

*And they walk in and the question is, "Are the students working well? Is there anything we can help you with?" Those are the sorts of questions you would ask, if it's appropriate, or you would just watch. And any student who didn't look like they were paying attention, you would, you know, make sure that they knew that that wasn't quite right*

In this moment she shifts from "they" to "you", moving herself into the leadership team and those who observe. In this small language change she appropriates the role of the classroom observer, explaining what "you" would do in these circumstances. She is no

longer part of the staff who have someone stand in their classroom and offer “support”, she has become the “other” who looks to see who might need it.

*But I know now, from being on the leadership team - and I've probably always suspected, but it wasn't a concern of mine, so I didn't really ever think about it - that, of course, they are looking at staff as well. Of course, it's a mechanism for monitoring any poor staff behaviour, I suppose*

Sarah was able to accept that the walkabout was about offering support with students, as she is positioned as an outstanding teacher. As she gained access to senior leadership meetings, she gained access to conversations that take place about these walkabouts and about how staff are spoken about:

*And each week, at leadership group meeting, we start with, you know, walkabout is the number one item on the agenda*

Gaining access to the senior leadership team means that the authoritative discourse is now being revealed to her in more detail and she is starting to think about what this means. She is positioned as one of the people who walk about, and as a part of the school “gaze” but she is now starting to find out what the consequences of these findings are.

*And it seems to be all very professional, and it's not overtly used in any way to, you know, as a stick to beat anyone with, but you can't escape the fact that the monitoring is there. And even though there is a high level of trust in people - you know, our books aren't scrutinised, we don't have book scrutiny, we don't have set agendas for department meetings, there's a high level of trust - there's a high level of monitoring as well*

The concept of high-trust and high-monitoring do not seem to fit well together, despite Sarah repeating both terms a number of times. This seems to be a point where Sarah is



working with the authoritative discourse, and perhaps being ventriloquated a little as she responds to the new information. The phrase “it seems to be all very professional” implies doubts, so the newness of her role and new position within the inner circle is still being addressed. She is responding as she talks to me about it, and she has neither resisted nor appropriated this practice yet, but there is some tension. Sarah is experiencing heteroglossia, but these are not just external voices. In order to author herself as an Assistant Headteacher, she needs to make meaning from the new information available to her, and to start to consider things that did not concern her when she was not a part of the SLT team.

Sarah is now starting to consider the effects of these walkabouts on someone who has had a different experience to her of being observed.

*So that inevitably puts the pressure on, because if you are doing badly all the time on those walkabouts, or, you know, if you are reported, or if someone says, or someone mentions something and, you know, things are being said about you, or the kids are constantly saying, ‘Oh, you never mark the books,’ then, of course, that’s not going to look good.*

This is a different story of the way that others might experience the school, where gaze can come from any direction, with the potential to create an orchestration of voices that can make you “not look good”. This gives a very different picture of the school and the way that teachers might experience working in it. It also gives a very different picture of the leadership team.

*But I now know lots of things like that have been dealt with at senior leadership level. I’m finding out this year, all the people who I thought left*

*because they wanted to leave, but really left because they had no other choice*

Sarah's insider information is giving her a different understanding of the culture of the school. She is learning what is "dealt with at senior leader level" and what the expectations of the role are. Sarah does not have to accept this, she could become one of the teachers that leave, but she has already invested in her good fortune of "landing" in this school and compared this to the experiences of others who "ended up" somewhere else. Her internally persuasive discourse that she is lucky to be in this school seems to influence how she responds:

*I think, at the end of the day, even though I have never seen this side of things, in order to be an outstanding school with, you know, great teachers who are willing to go the extra mile, and stay late every night, and, you know, do all the extra, you know, do whatever it takes, which is one of our, sort of, unwritten mottos*

In this section Sarah is starting to assume the language of a senior leader. She is talking about the teachers in the school as other to herself. Whereas throughout her story Sarah has been careful to be modest and play down her achievements, here she talks about "great teachers" and what the school's expectation of them is. There is no more "they" or "you" as she now talks about "our mottos". She starts to appropriate the authoritative discourse and make meaning from it as she takes on her new position as a leader:

*But alongside that, you know, whether you like it or not, anyone who is not fitting in with that culture, anyone who is undermining that, and anyone who is, you know, not being professional, and not great in the classroom – you don't have to be great – but not even good in the classroom, and not accepting support, doesn't end up staying*

Sarah goes from claiming that she had been surprised to find out that certain teachers had been asked to leave, rather than having chosen to do so, to classing them as “not professional” or “undermining” the culture of the school. This is a point where the authoritative discourse is becoming her part of her IPD. She is making meaning from what she has learnt and in doing so she is starting to work on her professional identity as a school leader by taking an authorial stance.

*And I imagine it's the same in any good business that's thriving. You are not going to hold on to anyone who is not working with you. And that's not to say there aren't, you know, people have different strengths, and everyone has weaknesses, but I think it's more about the people who didn't buy in and were never going to*

Despite the appearance of balance by talking about how everyone has strengths and weaknesses, Sarah is storying those who had no other choice but to leave, as having agency to accept support and to change, but refusing to do so. As she does this, she takes on the voice of the senior leader rather than the colleague and positions herself alongside those that have to make decisions for the greater good of the school.

#### 6.4 “It’s very difficult for me to talk about them objectively, when I’ve only ever benefitted”

Sarah states that the reason that she that she can accept the way that the school operates is that she has always benefitted from it.

*I feel like I've always been very valued at the school. And I feel as though, even though there might be systems that, from the outside, I would disagree with, or certain values that might not sit comfortably with me at first, I suppose the reality is that I've always benefitted from, I've benefitted.*

Sarah has, in Ball's terms, always been in the "strong market" (Ball, 2003: 225) at her school so that she has not experienced the darker side of the school management process personally. Unlike those who were never going to buy in, Sarah has a positive experience of being at the school and has found ways to incorporate the authoritative discourse and her own IPD. She notes that this is in part because of her successes in the school, and that if she had had a different experience of the school that this would have been more difficult.

*If I'd had a horrible year, of horrible exam results, I felt like I wasn't being recognised, and I didn't get any sort of promotions, or I didn't go through my pay threshold, you know, and all that sort of thing, I might then start thinking, 'Hang on. Well, that doesn't fit with me.' And, 'Why is the school doing this?' And you can see how your outlook is going to be affected by how valued you feel, and how well you're doing, professionally, I think.*

The voices that question the school are the voices of people who had not bought in, however. These are voices of people who do not feel incredibly lucky to be working in her school, and who perhaps have not been willing to conform in order to follow the easy path of academic success, or in this case of career progression.

This is something that she contrasts with friends that she has who are in different settings.

*And I keep coming back to friends in teaching, but I realise that I'm having a very different experience from some people, and I'm constantly aware of how fortunate I am for that, I think. To be able to come home, after having literally not stopped from 7.30, taught all day, lunchtime meeting, straight to another school, and, like, 12 hours later, stop and not feel a little bit tired and depressed and, you know, have a negative outlook. But I'm feeling quite positive, as opposed to somebody else, who has done the same day as me but comes feeling a bit, sort of, beaten and defeated, because they are not necessarily feeling as valued.*

Sarah compares herself to other teachers, to reinforce the way that she stories herself as fortunate, despite the long hours. This is a very detailed description of how long and hard her day is, and whilst she likens this to the “exact same day” of someone else, I do wonder if this is Sarah positioning herself as someone who works that little bit harder, and therefore as someone who deserves to be valued. Importantly, Sarah’s hard work is noticed in her school. This started in her NQT year when her Head of Department (HoD) *“took a liking to me”* and when she took on extra responsibilities in her second year as she was advised *“if you do this without being paid, you’ll definitely be paid for it one day.”* Sarah was willing to take the advice that she was offered, and showed a willingness to “buy in” that led to her feeling valued.

Sarah has consistently spoken about opportunities and good fortune, and in talking about how she has benefitted from the culture of the school, she is starting to show how willing she has been to feel valued and to be seen as valuable to the school. Sarah has positioned herself as someone that wants to do well in the school, and as someone who is willing to appropriate the culture and the authoritative discourse of the school. She positions taking on extra work for free as an opportunity, a stepping stone. This allows her to continue to call herself fortunate.

It is not just the promotion that is important to Sarah feeling valued though, it is also feeling valued by others, particularly *“by the parents, by the kids, by your colleagues, by*

management". It is also important to Sarah that the subject she teaches is valued and that this is represented in the school timetable:

*I love the fact that... Again, it's luck. I landed in a school where languages were really valued, and still are. Like, I've got a Year 9 GCSE class who, I'm giving a lesson every single day with them. I teach them every single day.*

She compares this to:

*My friend, who is teaching languages in Derbyshire, and she sees them once a fortnight. Of course, they're not making any progress.*

Again, using others to reinforce her good fortune.

## 6.5 "Sorry, I keep coming back to this fortunate thing. It is like therapy actually."

We had both noticed that she kept returning to the idea of being fortunate and I wanted to question that further:

*Claire: I'm just wondering if this is an outlook that you've always had, of feeling fortunate, or whether you are fortunate.*

*Sarah: Hmm. I think it is my outlook. I am very glass half full.*

*Claire: Have you chosen to be fortunate?*

*Sarah: Maybe not. I think it's my outlook, but I also think I've been lucky. I can't think, you know, when awful things have happened, or when I realise how things could have been, there's never been a point where I've thought, you know, "Woe is me." I always think, "Actually, it could have been worse." I think that's just my personality.*

Sarah refuses to appropriate the idea that she has chosen to be fortunate. In the story that she tells, she defines herself as “very glass half full” and as “lucky”. Sarah defines herself as *being* these things, she *is* optimistic and she *is* lucky. Sarah rejects the idea that she merely *feels* fortunate entirely. Even when pushed further and questioned if by choosing to stay on at her school she has “*made decisions, maybe, that have led you to being fortunate?*”.

*I have always thought, I think I've always assumed that I was lucky to land there, in my NQT year. And then lucky to be kept on and valued. I think I've always felt like that. Because my friends, who took exactly the same route as me, haven't landed... I feel like I have landed on my feet.*

At each point that Sarah states that she is lucky, she compares herself to others. She uses the metaphor of “*landing*” in her school frequently, giving the sense of it being accidental. That her good fortune was simply that, but as we discuss whether or not she is making her own luck, she does mention her own efforts.

*I know that I've worked hard as well, and I know that, you know, I remember starting that school with four other NQTs, and three of them weren't kept on. We were all on temporary contracts, and they weren't kept on.*

This is an important point in the way that Sarah tells her story. She is now looking at the place where she ‘landed’ as an NQT, and those that landed there with her, and she notes that she was the only one who was kept on, and that perhaps she did have a part to play.

*But of that year, I was kept on. I remember thinking, “Oh, that's lucky. They must really need somebody in languages.” And, actually, I look back and I think, you know, “Maybe I just worked really hard.” Not that they didn't. And, “Maybe I just deserved it.” I don't know. But I've always just felt... I feel like I've just been very fortunate in life.*

It seems that Sarah is comfortable in choosing to see herself as lucky. She is reluctant to say that she deserved something over someone else and to position herself as more hard working or deserving than the other NQTs. Instead, she balances her hard work, to say that this was not different to the others, and as she makes a claim for deserving to be kept on, she returns quickly to her good fortune in life.

Sarah's story has started to become more complex, and there are signs of multiple voices: the voice that she uses to state her good fortune does not seem to fit with the staff that have not been kept on at the school. Sarah has claimed that she landed in a school that has made her feel valued, but she has also revealed that this is not the case for everyone working in that school, and that for some, their *"face did not fit"*. The decision not to ask questions, whether it be why others are leaving or why they decided to keep her on align more with her story of finding it difficult to look objectively at the school when she has benefitted from its culture.

For this reason, I tentatively asked:

*"If you didn't like this school, if you didn't want to work this hard, it might be a hellish place to work?"*

On this occasion, Sarah quickly appropriates this:

*Sarah: "Oh, yes, definitely. Definitely, yes, and, I think, as I was saying before, people who have realised that this isn't for them, leave. And it's not just that they are scared of hard work. It's, maybe they don't align with, you know, that behaviour policy, and the high exclusions, and the number one haircut speech, you know, that isn't for everybody at all."*

*Claire: So why is it for you?*



*Sarah: I don't think it is for me. I think I'm pragmatic, and I think it is an approach that works, and it does well for lots and lots of kids.*

What Sarah calls pragmatism here is her ability to accept the school's authoritative discourse as something that works for "kids" but also something that worked for her. She has entered into different educational worlds as a neophyte: the catholic primary school when she was not yet a catholic; the independent school when the fees were not being paid and she has learnt how to fit in. This seems to be similar to how she describes starting to "make a success of herself" (Ball, 2003: 219) in her school. She describes how she had not considered teaching as a career but that *"I realised that that seemed to be what people did"*. Sarah seems to have learnt how to position herself in new worlds through watching others and accepting their advice and any opportunities that are offered. She also seems to be aware that she has invested wholeheartedly into the school's authoritative discourse, claiming that:

*I think what really happened is, I was indoctrinated into the culture of the school, and that's where I started to be successful in that context. And that context is all I've ever known, I suppose*

It is not however all that she has ever known. Her brother was excluded from every school in the local area by the time that he was twelve, and she remembers the change of lifestyle that came with her parents attaining degrees. Sarah chooses to be fortunate, because she can remember not being, and this story runs right through the interview. It has also given her a position of power, so that she is now the observer, rather than the observed.

This story reminds me of Ball's description of the "new hero manager" who is a "beneficiary of reform" (Ball, 2003: 219) but this feels like an overinterpretation, as Sarah seems more complex. She is successful, and she does want to feel valued, but she is giving a positive account of being a teacher and leader and in this she is consistent. It is possible that this use of fortune or misfortune is a way of working along the margins and boundaries of the performative discourse. It is possible that Sarah has needed to adapt to making a success of herself from a very young age, and that she has needed to have a pragmatic internally persuasive discourse that prioritises hard work and aspiration. It is also possible that Sarah needs to feel fortunate to keep feeling positive after the long hours that she works, and that she has appropriated the school's authoritative discourse because it is similar to the independent education that she had, which she had good reason to feel fortunate for. In concealing the hard work required, Sarah can appear to be inauthentic, but it seems that she could be considered as one of Margaret Thatcher's poppies (Thatcher, 1975). Perhaps poppies are not supposed to mention where they came from, so that in order for Sarah to stand tall, she feels the need to say that she is fortunate, but also just like the rest of the poppies.

Sarah's story is one of being able to marry the school's authoritative discourse with her own internally persuasive discourse. She has learnt how to fit into the school, and how to be successful within it. This means that she is not only aware of the gaze, but she is a part of it, and she is starting to understand just how important "buying in" is to how successful teachers can be. Sarah finds a way to internalise and appropriate her story of "good fortune" of "landing" in her school with that of those who do not have a positive experience

there, but she does not come across as having “values schizophrenia” or having “no room for caring” so much as working in an environment that she genuinely believes links to her personal values. She talks about how not sharing these values and therefore not being able to “buy in” mean that it would be impossible to stay at the school and can therefore find a place to accept that some teachers and pupils are pushed out so that the authoritative discourse can remain.

Sarah’s story is one of learning how to make a success of herself through education, and she believes that the school’s strict authoritative discourse offers a way to also make a difference to her pupils’ lives. This then, moves her away from simply being the “new hero manager” and technician of behaviour” even though these are a part of her role. Sarah is more complex than this figure in Ball’s paper as she has experience of how things could have been different for her, and how the opportunities that education, through her parents and through her own hard work, have positioned her differently. Sarah’s story then shows how important feeling valued and being able to marry personal values with those of the school are to the way that she identifies as a teacher and to the position that she has within the school. It contrasts greatly from Stephanie’s story, and it is also very different to the story that Jasmine tells in the next chapter.

## 7 Analysis 3: I don't know if I'd want to be sat in a meeting right now, discussing things that I don't actually believe in

Jasmine was a secondary school Art teacher at the time of the interview but had just secured an offer of a new role in a primary school. She is not primary trained, and the role was advertised as “cover teacher”, but she will be covering all teachers by teaching every class in a dedicated Art room. This is an unusual scenario, and one of her own design.

Jasmine's story is one of being an artist and a teacher, and about the different times in her life that one has been more apparent than the other, not only in her actual paid role, but also in the way that she sees herself. It is therefore a story of identity work, where she notes and reflects on tensions in order to make active choices on how to respond to them. These decisions do not lead to absolute freedoms, but they are a form of work along the margins and the interstices of the dominant discourses in her professional and personal life in order to seek out alternatives.

7.1 “There were a few years that I remember thinking, ‘I’m getting paid for this. This is brilliant”

Jasmine's story is not one of someone who always wanted to be a teacher. She states that:

*I suppose I've had an unorthodox career anyway in teaching, because of the way I started.... I'd done teaching as a back-up plan*

In fact, she says that she initially thought that teaching “*doesn't sound like something that I would do*”. Jasmine wanted to be a designer and throughout this story, she offers insights into multiple professional identities and the figures that influence her. In this case, she describes how her parents had also been teachers, but “they stayed in it about two years”. On leaving university, her parents encouraged her to train as a teacher saying “*you might not get a design job, so what are you going to do as a back-up?*” and Jasmine took their advice thinking “*Oh, right, okay, well that sounds like a sensible plan, then.*”

Jasmine puts forward from the beginning that she had not intended for teaching to be her life-long career path, but that it did offer her something. Describing her first teaching job she says:

*Even though it was a really tough school... I absolutely loved it. I went on loads of courses, dead inspirational, just buzzing off it. I met a really good group of NQTs [Newly Qualified Teachers] and ... I thought, “Yes, this is for me”.*

Jasmine's description of her first few years of teaching do not position her as the reluctant teacher. Nevertheless, after two years she was offered a design role, so she resigned and instead “*did my own artwork to commission, and then workshops in primary [schools], then some supply as well*”. Teaching then, despite “loving it” and thinking “this is for me” in those first two years, was still part of the sensible plan, not the dream job. Teaching as a back-up supply teacher was not rewarding for Jasmine however as:

*I hated supply. I absolutely hated it, because I didn't get that bond with the kids, the rapport, the relationships with the staff.*

Jasmine's description of being a full-time teacher, shows an investment in the relational aspect of being a teacher. The pupils and the staff in schools are strong figures in Jasmine's story, so are her parents, and so is her husband. When he suggests that she applies for a full-time temporary role as an Art teacher in the school where he worked, she describes how conflicted she was saying:

*I'm loving doing my artwork. I know it's not making much money, but I could really make a go of this...*

*But then again it was really solitary. I was in a shed painting. Then Seb would come home at the end of the day, and I'd be, like, chewing his ear off because I hadn't spoken to anyone all day.*

Seb, unlike her parents, is a figure that represents teaching as a long-term career. He also represents different aspirations for Jasmine, which were linked to her taking the Art teacher job at his school. Despite her reluctance to give up commissioned artwork, she describes enjoying being back in the classroom saying:

*There were a few years that I remember thinking, 'I'm getting paid for this. This is brilliant. I'm getting paid for this job.' I'd do this, not for free, clearly, but I actually get up in the morning and I'm, like, 'Yes!' dead excited 'I've got this new thing to show the kids', or a lesson that I've planned, and resources that I've done, and worksheets that I'm going to give out for homework, you know, like, properly into it.*

Jasmine's professional identities are not straightforward. The precariousness of being an artist sits against the stability of the role of the teacher, but more than this, Jasmine seems to need to invest fully in whatever she is doing. She is influenced by the figures in her

worlds so that, in her story, choosing to teach does not seem to be her idea, but she sounds very passionate about the experience of teaching. She talks specifically of enjoying all aspects of the role of the teacher, but particularly of the relationship with the pupils and sharing her love of Art with them. Jasmine seems to be able to enjoy the moment in teaching, to throw herself into it completely, but she doesn't position herself as tied to teaching. This does not mean that she does not take it seriously though, as she describes how:

*You're responsible for kids' enjoyment at school, how they progress. And if you're not 100% in it, it shows, and it shows in the results, it shows in the way the kids... They know, don't they? They know if you're not into it.*

Jasmine positions the good teacher as fully committed and the pupils as able to perceive their authenticity. This 100% "all in" and the "back-up" approach to teaching seem to be dichotomous, but Jasmine has an "enjoyment" approach to being a teacher, which means that she is concerned that when she is not enjoying it, the pupils won't either. Here Jasmine's internally persuasive discourse (IPD) tells her that when she is not enjoying teaching, she needs to act.

*After a bit I was just, like, phew, this is too much, you know. The behaviour, I think, was the main thing and I thought, 'Right, I need to try something else.'*

Jasmine's approach means that she needs to invest in teaching and relationships, rather than the professional identity of being a teacher. Her success criteria include progress and results, but these seems to be the by-product rather than the main focus of her lessons. In

positioning enjoyment as part of the success criteria, she creates a space to reflect on how to act if the enjoyment is not there.

## 7.2 “There’s got to be some balance going on”

Seb is an important figure in her return to teaching, not only because he suggested it, but also because her reasons were linked to joint goals. She says that:

*He’d gone through a few years being a bit of a risk-taker, which he’s not. He’s not at all. I was quite happy going along, doing what I was doing, but he was, like, “Right, we’re going to have kids. We need to have a bit of security.”*

Jasmine positions the choice to be an artist as financially risky, which also echoes with her parents’ suggestion to train to teach as a back-up plan. This was an idea that she appropriated when she called it “a sensible plan” and Jasmine seems to draw on this when she says that she thought:

*‘Right, I’ll do it. Let’s get a bit of security in our finances.’ And it was temporary...*

Jasmine uses direct speech a lot in the interview and there is a sense of heteroglossia to her decisions. In this case, the voices that have told her that teaching is a sensible back-up plan and that it can offer security and financial stability when needed, are a strong part of her story. She then uses her own voice, again using direct speech to show what she decided to do. This is important to the way that Jasmine tells her story, as she seems to own the decision to return on a temporary basis, and present it as her choice.

*And then we had Megan. So it was, like, travel to work together, drop Megan off at the nursery very near the school, go to work...*



If the reason for taking on the role of the teacher again was to have a family, then she presents the family unit here in a way that suggests stability and unity. This is why I wondered if:

*Claire:           Maternity leave becomes quite...*

*Jasmine:       Yes, I know. And, yes, that sounds awful to think that's, kind of, the security thing is the main thing. The start to my teaching career wasn't the best, I think.*

Jasmine appropriates immediately that maternity was part of their plan before I finish the sentence, but she also criticises this choice, again returning back her IPD of the fully committed teacher. Jasmine's family picture becomes even more traditional as she describes Seb getting a role as an Assistant Headteacher in a different school. She didn't seem to be positioning herself as either an artist or a teacher in this conversation, so I asked:

*Claire:           So, you've got a husband who is following a trajectory upwards, and where are you at that point in your career, then, what were you thinking?*

*Jasmine:       I'm going to have babies. (Laughter) That was totally it. 'I'm going to have children, and I probably shouldn't go for promotions because that will then become too much.' Or, 'If I'm going to have babies, I shouldn't go for promotion, because then I've got to go off on maternity leave very soon after'. So that would be really bad, wouldn't it, if I did that, kind of, thing?*

So far, Jasmine has storied herself as an artist who teaches as back up, and then as a parent who teaches to provide financial security. She has not positioned career progression as her

focus, but does note that it was for Seb. She tells me that she was only approached once to apply for a promotion at Eden but:

*I was due to go off on maternity leave, and then it was just, like, 'I don't know what it's going to be like when I have the kid, or, you know, with two. Is it going to be too full on? Seb's very busy with his role.' And I think, yes, a lot of it, I suppose, has been, 'Seb's been really busy with his. There's got to be some balance going on.'"*

Jasmine is able to capture the unknowingness of having children as she stories her decision not to apply for the promotions as one of balance. In the standard plot of the good teacher progressing up the career ladder this does not quite present as a balanced picture.

### 7.3 "To be a classroom teacher for so long, and have no responsibility, apart from the ones you volunteer for, is odd"

I was very interested in how Jasmine understood her story of wanting babies and so-called balance, rather than promotion and asked why she decided not to act when invited to apply, even whilst pregnant.

*Claire: Is it that you would have liked to have done it, or is it that you saw that there was a barrier, and you didn't really want to?*

*Jasmine: No. No, not at all. I think what I've always felt is, that you should go for promotion, and that has always been the message, you know, in our place, that you go for it. It's a bit odd if you don't. To be a classroom teacher for so long, and have no responsibility, apart from the ones you volunteer for, is odd.*

Here Jasmine does not appropriate my suggestion that the barrier of taking maternity leave was useful to her. Instead she talks about her view and the view of the school that you should go for promotions. Jasmine seems to agree with the school's general consensus that not applying for promotions is odd, and does not seem to think that her not being interested in advancing her career is necessarily a long term choice. She questions herself and the timing.

*I always thought, 'Is it because I don't want it, or is it because of my confidence?' Because there's a whole issue about public speaking as well; if I got a promotion, I would have to speak ... to more than three adults at a time. So, I think I have backed off things because of that.*

Jasmine seems to be figuring out her reasons for not applying for roles aloud as she moves from the unknown of having a baby, to taking a break from considering career advancement due to a maternity leave, to her confidence. Finally, she comes down on making choices according to her priorities, and leaving options open for later.

*But then, because I also like pushing myself and challenging myself, I think part of it is because I've just thought, 'Right, well, I'm going to be going off on maternity leave. I'm going to be doing this. Maybe this is just, give it a bit of a break, and then go back into it and think about that later.'*

Jasmine stories herself as someone who makes decisions based on what is right for her at the time. So, at this point in her life, she has already moved from being an artist to taking on a secure role as a teacher. She has done this as her focus is on having a family, and she seems to re-centre herself on this focus, having explored why she was not looking for promotions at that time. Jasmine then moves forward to when she started applying for jobs a year ago.

*When I was applying for the jobs, and I was just applying for teaching posts, and Seb was saying to me, 'Why aren't you going for Head of Department? I don't understand.' And I'm, like, 'Well, I don't know if I've got the experience.' He's, like, 'You have. You have got the experience.' And, 'Oh, and I don't know how to do the timetabling,' say. He's, like, 'You learn. You don't have to know how to do everything to start the job.' And I think I have got this fear of, like, 'Well, I don't know if I'll be able to do it. That might not be something I'll be able to do.'*

Jasmine again stories herself using Seb's voice to allow her to explore her thought process.

In doing so, she stories herself as someone who is lacking confidence and afraid, but she is not happy with this way of storying herself as she states:

*Although I have got confidence, like, I've got a weird type of confidence, that I know that I can do anything, or I know I can learn anything, but I don't want to be caught out.*

This confidence is apparent in the way that she describes what she fears:

*I think it's believing that you are a leader as well, or a manager, isn't it? I like taking the lead. I like autonomy. But I don't know if I enjoy managing people. I mean, I probably would enjoy it. I think I'd be quite good at it... But it's knowing that you'd be effective at it, and it's just doing it, isn't it? And then once you do it...*

Jasmine's description of her confidence is in keeping with the way that she describes her fear of applying for Head of Department roles. Seb's voice appears as a support one, and here she also pulls me in, asking tag questions and for my input as she works through her apparent lack of confidence.

This part of the interview feels very much as if I am witnessing self-authoring. Jasmine puts forward reasons for not applying for a promotion, one where the actual role is never

mentioned, and then when she seems to decide that she could do the role of a HoD goes on to say:

*It's just confidence. I think it's confidence. And I don't know if that's about how the school is, because they very much, like, cherry-pick people*

Until this point, Jasmine has put herself forward as someone who has made choices about whether or not she would like to apply for a promotion, but this reveals something different. In her school it is seen as odd if you do not go for promotions, and yet, Jasmine, when approached, did not. She did not pick up on the opportunity to apply for a role when she was pregnant, and she tells me that she has not been invited to apply since. Jasmine then is not only talking about confidence, but about being positioned as a potential leader within her school and whether or not she has tried to position herself in this way. She states that:

*If you've put yourself out there and gone for things, or paid posts, then you're, sort of told, 'Oh, by the way, such-and-such is coming up.'*

Jasmine does not dwell on the way that she seems to have positioned herself in the school by not applying for the role whilst pregnant, rather she returns to why she hadn't wanted to and how she envisages the leadership role:

*I'd just really enjoyed being in the classroom as well. Like, that's the bit I really like. And I often look at the senior team and think, 'Oh, I don't know if I'd want to be sat in a meeting right now, discussing things that I don't actually believe in.' But maybe if it was a school I did really believe in, then I might want to be in those meetings.*

Throughout the interview, Jasmine has used direct speech to put across important feelings in her story. She has identified as an artist, as a teacher, as a wife, a mother and a daughter,

but not as a leader. This comment is important, not only because she states that she needs to believe in the school, but also that she does believe in teaching and leadership. Jasmine is able to consider different angles and resist the standard plot by questioning what she would like to do, rather than what she is expected to do. This means that she offers multiple reasons for not applying for leadership roles, which are:

*A bit of that [believing in the role], the confidence, the way the school cherry-picks, if your face fits.*

What is consistent in Jasmine's story is a need to be fully invested and right now, in this school, she would not be.

#### 7.4 "I don't want to know your data. I just want to do my best for you"

When Jasmine spoke about being responsible for pupil progress and results, I thought that she had appropriated some of the performative discourse and incorporated it with her own IPD. This did not however mean that she had incorporated the use of data to inform and audit practice, which becomes apparent when I asked:

*Claire: So, what about something where you feel like you would hide a bit. What sort of things make you feel like that?*

*Jasmine: Anything to do with data.*

Jasmine says that data is something that she "could totally learn" but that she is "turned off by it completely". She continues:

*I look at data and I think, 'Right, where have they [the pupils] come from? Where have they got to get to?' But it doesn't seem to make any difference, for me, how I teach those kids.*

Data for Jasmine seems to be something that she is not only resisting, but rejecting as she states:

*So, you know, I almost feel a bit, like, 'I don't want to know your data. I just want to do my best for you, and I recognise in the way you are, as a person, and what your work's like, what I can do for you'. Those numbers don't come into it as much.*

There is a resistance to the authoritative discourse of performativity and importance of data, as Jasmine describes how her relational approach to teaching, which has been present throughout her story, does not seem to fit with the way that data is used.

She gives a specific example of a pupil:

*I've got a really lovely Year 11, who has just left, done so well. I predicted a D. Oh, no, I predicted an E, but she's going to get a C. She's loved the course. Not always been there, her attendance hasn't been great, but she's buzzed off what she's done. But if I'd have thought of her as an E grade kid too much, because that's the conversation you have sometimes, 'Oh, she's an E grade anyway, so she's not going to do great.' Well, no, I don't believe that, because I can see that she's got passion and she does want to do it.*

Jasmine's internally persuasive discourse tells her that data will not help her to help this pupil. Jasmine has previously referred to how pupils can see if you are committed to teaching, and here, she seems to focus on passion rather than predictions. The performative discourse that positions a pupil as a grade or a number is not something that Jasmine seems to be able to appropriate. This rejection could be seen as problematic, but

she describes a whole school data analysis session which focussed on “closing the attainment gap” for students who receive pupil premium funding. She states that:

*When we had one of these data meetings training, they did mine as an example, and ... this real number cruncher guy was, like, ‘Oh, that’s really interesting, because your gap is very narrow, actually, with your PP [pupil premium] kids, you know, you do very well with PP kids,’ and all this. I thought, ‘Oh, well, that’s really good then, isn’t it? But I didn’t know that. I wasn’t aware of that. I’m not sure how that had happened.’ But it’s numbers, it’s data, it’s figures. It’s not really important, you know.*

Jasmine again rejects the importance of data, not only in stating that it isn’t important, but also in the way that she refers to the “number crunching guy”. In the figured world of a school that invites a “number cruncher” in to talk to the whole staff, I wondered about her claim that she “did not know” and asked:

*Claire: Do you think you don’t know how that’s happened?*

*Jasmine: Well, it might just be that cohort of children (Laughter) have, like... I don’t know.*

*Claire: Some of the things, your attitude with the way that you teach them might be...?*

*Jasmine: Well, it probably is, but it doesn’t necessarily mean that if you’re a PP child, you’re not good at Art. Do you know what I mean? That’s maybe sometimes where they excel. So, it’s almost ... a waste of time, in a way, looking at that. Because what would you do differently if they weren’t [a PP child]”*

Jasmine here is rejecting specifically this type of data, because she does not see it as helpful to her practice. Throughout the entire discussion she relates a different way of approaching the child. The data does not seem to impact on her values of how to teach and despite the importance placed on performativity, her rejection of data as an informant on how to teach does not position her negatively in the school. In Jasmine’s case “value” does not “replace



values” (Ball, 2003: 217) and Jasmine has not described any terrors when she describes performativity. She has not rejected finding a way to support pupils on an individual basis; she has rejected data that she does not find useful in figuring out how best to do this. Therefore, even as she rejects data as unimportant, she is praised for good practice.

## 7.5 “Time for a fresh start – Do the work you love”

In this final section, Jasmine describes how she managed to find her new job.

*Yes. So, yes, so I'd got to the point, last year, I knew I needed out of Eden School.... thinking 'This is nothing like it used to be,' in the sense that I used to bound around thinking, 'I'm getting paid for it' and now the kids are walking out, and I'm going, 'Fucking hell. I need to get a new job.'*  
(Laughter) *Yes, and I think I'd done my time there; time for a fresh start.*

Jasmine positions Eden, rather than teaching as the problem, and she describes how she was a “bit arrogant” as she thought that she would get a job “quite easily”.

*It didn't even come into my head that, because I'm more expensive, I've got more experience, that I would be less desirable than an NQT, who is £10,000 less.*

Jasmine describes her disappointment in not getting a new job, and in even not getting interviews in some cases and how it affected her confidence. Jasmine does not seem to feel trapped by the teaching, and has never considered it to be the only possible role for her. She returns to this when she says:

*So, then I started thinking, 'Oh, maybe this isn't for me. Maybe I need to go into something completely different.' And then it was that, kind of, 'Right, I'm going to leave it for a bit. I'm not going to apply for anything. I'm just going to give myself a break. Think about it'.*

Jasmine had previously said, when discussing promotions, that she decided to “take a break” and here she uses the same strategy. She gives herself time to think, not only about what she will do about the situation, but also about what her other career choices might be. Throughout her story Jasmine has not considered teaching to be her only option, and this is again the case. Jasmine also has other strategies that she uses such as self-help tapes. She describes two of these in detail. One is named “Live your Legend” (Dinsmore, 2019) which she states is based on “the Anthony Robbins thing” (Robbins, 2019). Jasmine talks with great authority about these tapes, and describes what they do for her. Referring to Anthony Robbins she says:

*He gets you to feel leverage, so that it gets you to think about things. And, what's this doing to me and my family and my friends, me not doing what I want to do? How is that affecting my life?' And really making you feel so bad about it that you get leverage and you do something about it.*

This is Jasmine doing identity work. She actively looks for voices on tapes that can motivate her to figure things differently, and to make an active change. So, when Jasmine describes taking a break, she says that:

*Throughout this time, I've been doing the whole brainwashing thing on the way to work, (laughter) and listening to the tapes and really peppering myself up for it. And then I got to the place, 'All right, I'm ready again.'*

Jasmine's “brainwashing” approach is to listen to tapes on the way to work in order to raise her confidence. It is an interesting word, potentially just self-deprecating, but it is a very important word, given Ball's description of the teachers who take on the performative discourse until they assume it as their own. Contrary to this, Jasmine positions these tapes

as a way of actively resisting the things that she is unhappy with at Eden, and a way to decide what her next steps will be.

*Claire: So, peppering yourself up to get into work and get through the day, or peppering yourself up to be able to put yourself on the line again?*

*Jasmine: Both. Literally, like, talking to myself all the way to work. And I've got a wall in my walk-in wardrobe ... and I'd put all my sheets up. There's a thing called Live Your Legend. I don't know if you've heard of it? ... It's, like, 'Live your legend. Do the work you love,' basically.*

Jasmine's approach to disappointment was to position herself differently to herself. She chose not to author herself as someone who did not get the jobs that she applied for, but instead to question what sort of job she wanted and to figure out how to build up her confidence to try again.

As her story progresses, and here in particular, rather than look at the family as something that might hold her back, Jasmine is using it as a positive force. She finds "leverage" through questioning what affect her unhappiness at work is having on her family. Jasmine stories herself as someone who talks to herself. In Figured World terms, she is heteroglossic, and makes a choice to self-author so that her inner voice is active and listened to. She uses her voice throughout the interview, and she actively looks for voices to fit with her own, or to guide it, so that she can guide her own actions.

*So, basically, so these goals, it's, like, 'Well, what are you going to do about it? What's going to help you to get there?' So, I've been utilizing that kind of thing. So, getting better at interview, with my friend, who's a primary head. She's been mock interviewing me, and all that kind of thing. So just doing things that, you know, putting myself out there a bit more.*

It is not just that she looks for positive voices, Jasmine also looks for feedback. She reflected on why she did not get the jobs she had applied for a year earlier and decided to work on areas she felt would help her get there. Practicing interviews with a friend, who is in a position to help her, means asking for critical feedback in order to get better at them. Jasmine is using the voices that she seeks out to attain something that she wants.

Jasmine also had to figure out what she wanted. She described how she has created her “dream job”, which was advertised as a cover teacher in a primary school. Jasmine says:

*I went in thinking, ‘I don’t just want to be a cover teacher. I want to go in and do more. I want to be able to do art clubs at lunchtime, and after-school sessions, and build up the profile of the arts within this school. Do Artsmark applications, and write the arts policy’, or whatever, stuff that I’ve done, that I know I can do. Because the idea of, like, bringing the artist into the school, and taking the kids out on trips, and doing community art projects, and all that kind of thing, really excites me.*

When Jasmine refers to “bringing the artist into the school” she is referring to herself.

Jasmine has repositioned herself as an artist, as well as a teacher and despite the role being advertised as something that did not appeal to her, she found a way to adapt it and instead offered a great deal more.

*I wasn’t even going to go for this job that I’ve got, because I thought, ‘Oh, yes, they won’t want a secondary teacher. It’s just for primary.’ And I thought, ‘No, I’m going to go and find out a bit more about this.’ So, I’ve been phoning the school. No answer. Then I spoke to someone there, who said, ‘It’s whoever’s face fits. Apply for it.’*

Jasmine's use of direct speech shows the inner conflicts she had in applying for this role, and also that she uses them to author the situation and make choices. In doing so, she demonstrates what it is to be heteroglossic, and how she actively chooses to take action.

*But I was still really nervous, like, you know, a panel of four, I couldn't really speak. I couldn't get my words ... Then it was about ten minutes in, and I was just, like, 'Pull yourself together. This is a really good opportunity, and you're going to fuck it up if you carry on being as nervous as you are now, because you're not showing what you're like, and you're not telling them everything that you've practised.' Because I'd done so much practice. I'd been talking to myself in the car all the time.*

Jasmine also shows a moment of outsideness, where she takes control of the situation and her nerves by talking to herself. She does this in the car to prepare for the interview, but then she also uses this technique during the interview. Jasmine has put in a great deal of work to be ready for this interview, and in part, she has learnt to notice when the interview is not going well and to position herself differently. She was also very well prepared and had considered the visual effect of her work:

*Then I was talking to the head, and he was saying, 'Yes, Art is, we know it's important, but we're not great at it here, and we want someone to build the profile of it...' Then I was showing them my work in my portfolio, and that was dead easy, to talk about what I did. Show them the work and, like, the success stories with the kids. I've taken photographs. I've been amazed they've come to lunchtime clubs, and that kind of thing.*

Bringing in a portfolio allowed Jasmine to talk about her work, but it also allowed her to sell what she could do for the school in the interview. She could show how the school could "look" and this means that she could appeal to the headteacher on a performative level, so that she was using the performative discourse to her advantage.

Jasmine's story is about identity and agency. About choosing how she sees herself, and about how to put this across to others. Jasmine seems to resist positional identities, both in her pupils and in herself, choosing to figure things differently when they do not "feel right".

*I just think it just went well for me. Because you feel it's right, don't you? I wasn't bullshitting about what I was talking about. I did actually believe it. Whereas, you know, maybe previously, I've felt like I wasn't being truthful. I don't know. Well, not truthful, but not feeling like, 'This is for me,' whereas I feel like this is.*

Jasmine is very far from the teachers that Ball describes in *The Teacher's Soul* and the *Terrors of Performativity*. In her story, there is a quest to be authentic, and to find ways to achieve this. She does not self-regulate according to the performative discourse; she self-regulates according to the person that she wants to be. Her personal and professional identities cross and intertwine throughout her story so that, although Jasmine did not initially choose to be a teacher, she has found a way to be the teacher that she wants to be.

In the next chapter I will look at how these three stories offer a way to consider teachers as agentic, even when working within a performative discourse. I refer to the three data analysis chapters and the tools for analysis that I have taken from the theoretical framework and also turn back to the current literature from chapter two in order to answer my research questions.

# 8 Discussion

In the previous chapters I have shown that Stephanie, Sarah and Jasmine have had, and are still having very different lived experiences of being a teacher and this is, in part, because of the way that they approach their roles and the way that they respond to the competing voices around them. All three respond to the performative discourse differently, and all three author themselves in terms of this professional discourse in different ways. These responses are also based on the way that the performative discourse impacts on the figured world of the schools where they work, and the way that they are positioned within it.

In this chapter I will respond to the research questions by looking at key themes that arose in the participants' stories, in the literature and through using the theoretical framework and tools for analysis outlined in the methodology section.

## 8.1 How does the teacher describe their lived experience of working in a secondary school sixteen years after "The Teacher's Soul and The Terrors of Performativity" was published

The three data analysis chapters show a very complex picture of what it means to be a teacher and how the role is experienced. My first research question asks how the teacher describes their lived experience of working in the secondary school sixteen years after "The Teacher's Soul and the Terrors of Performativity" was published. This does not mean that they have been asked to read the paper and reflect on it, rather, this discussion chapter will reflect on how the performative discourse may have become tangled into the teacher's

understanding of what the standard plot of the teacher is and the way that they respond. Ball's paper calls out the issues of "the market, managerialism and performativity" (Ball, 2003: 215) but in 2003, these were described as part of an "education reform package" (Ball, 2003: 215). He describes these as "set over and against older policy technologies [such as] professionalism". It is for this reason that descriptions, predictions and critiques of what teacher professionalism is, has been and could be (Hargreaves, 2000; Hargreaves, 2018; Sachs, 2001; Sachs, 2016; Whitty, 2000) are important to understanding the "standard plot" (Holland et al., 2001: 52) of the "good" teacher.

The figurative "good" teacher is set against professional standards, and audited by the school and a regulatory body, such as Ofsted, but also by the teachers themselves. This is where the authoritative discourse of what a good school and a good teacher is, can lead to institutions and individuals being given a position of effective (good or outstanding) or ineffective (requires improvement or inadequate) (OFSTED, 2015), and therefore placing them in the strong or weak market (Ball, 2003: 225). The positional and figurative identity of the good teacher, however, must also fit with the internally persuasive discourse of the individual, and this is linked to their own history-in-person (Holland et al., 2001: 33) and their motivations for becoming a teacher (Perryman and Calvert, 2019: 2).

The complexity that I would like to draw out here, is that if the performative discourse has its origins in the conservative ideologies of the 1980s (Education Reform Act, 1988), then the standard plot of the teacher, has been shaped by and with this discourse for over thirty years. It therefore becomes difficult to locate which aspects could be described as "twas



always thus” (Dickens, 1890: 109) and which are directly associated with the performative discourse that Ball describes.

### The gaze

One way to consider how the performative discourse specifically affects the teacher is to consider what Foucault describes as “the gaze” (Foucault, 1977:217). Foucault describes institutional “panopticism” (Foucault, 1977:217), based on Bentham’s panopticon, where the “object of inspection” would learn to fear the gaze of the inspector, who may or may not be looking at them at any moment. This fear would lead to self-regulation, so that their behaviour is adjusted according to the expectations of the inspector. As noted on page 30, Ball states that the gaze is problematic for teachers, who are not only being asked to opt into the performative system, but also to regulate themselves and understand themselves through it (Ball, 2003: 221), which means that it has an effect not only on their practice, but also on their professional identities. This Ball is what describes as performativity changing “not only what people, as educators do, but also who they are” (Ball, 2003: 215).

How a teacher looks and is figured is important to the way that the teachers in this study discuss their professional identity and all three experience the “gaze”(Foucault, 1977:217) in some way. Sarah has become a part of the gaze, as she is now one of the senior leaders that walks around the school. She makes it clear that she had positive experiences of being observed as she is classed as “outstanding” but also that the problems faced by others who were found to be wanting in the school “walkabout” were not a concern of hers before she

became an assistant headteacher. The gaze did not feel threatening to Sarah, but she is now learning that it can be for others, and she is learning how to author herself and the school in the light of this. Jasmine has experienced the gaze, but she is also a part of it. Her description of looking in at a senior leaders' meeting and thinking that she would not want to be sat in that room is very important to her story. For Jasmine, it is not "managerialism" that is the problem, so much as the things that the leaders in the figured world of Eden school focus on, and she uses this image to explain why promotion at Eden is not for her. Stephanie describes how she experiences the gaze from all sides, but what is most important in her story is that she is also looking in at herself and she is not happy with the way that she looks to herself or to the "rows of smiling children" who are watching and waiting for her to respond, in a way that she would prefer not to, when challenged.

The gaze then, is not just a way of being seen, so that the teacher feels the need to self-regulate according to the external "inspector". The gaze reflects the authority and power that are attached to the inspector, the value that is placed on their judgements and the way that the teachers also look in on themselves. For example, Stephanie experiences the gaze "from all sides" but, what is important to Stephanie is that she is also judging herself, so that it is about both internal and external judgements. The gaze then is heteroglossic, and in these cases, the teachers show the gaze as offering them "outsideness" (Bakhtin, 1981 cited in Holland et al., 2001 174) where they look in on themselves and their actions. This is important to understanding how teachers can use the gaze as part of the self-understandings and therefore use it in order to act differently.

One area where this can be seen is in the way that the teachers talk about behaviour.

According to standard plot, as described by all three participants, pupil behaviour is an indicator of the good teacher. The performative discourse is used to audit teachers' effectiveness and it uses pupil behaviour as an indication of this (OFSTED, 2015: 14).

For Sarah, pupil behaviour is one of the reasons that she can "buy in" to the ethos of her school, as the walkabouts and strict rules are, for her, ways for pupils to find a route to academic success and for her and other teachers in her school to be able to "actually teach". She is able to gain an authorial stance that the "walkabouts" and rules must be followed by everyone, so that those who are "undermining" the culture of the school do not "end up staying". Stephanie is struggling with what she describes as lowered standards in pupil behaviour, and how this affects her identity as a good teacher. She describes the gaze from the pupils who watch to see how she will react to behaviour that challenges her authority as a teacher, and whether or not she is one of the "weak" ones. Jasmine, however, describes behaviour as a reason to consider "a fresh start" saying that "they know when you're not that into it" and therefore uses pupil behaviour as a way to motivate herself to leave Eden. The performative discourse then, may be a way to audit the teacher according to the accepted norm of good behaviour or good exam results, but these teachers all seem to self-regulate according to both the external gaze that assesses and a more personal standard of what a good teacher might look like. They use their internally persuasive discourse in conjunction with the gaze, so that they are able to consider if and why they meet the criteria of "the good teacher" and then choose how to act differently.

When considered in this way, Stephanie's description of "a row of smiling faces" with whom "she does not have a good relationship", and who see her as "more of a hindrance than a help" is a point of self-reflection as well as her experiencing the gaze. This is a powerful description because of how important relationships are to her, and because she is judging herself as she projects her self-judgement of not challenging certain behaviours that she feels are unacceptable onto the way that the pupils perceive her. This is a point where she is considering whether or not she is becoming "one of the weak ones" but also if she is willing to. For Sarah, she is starting to understand the importance of the "walkabouts" and the fact that these are the first thing on the SLT agenda. At the moment, she does not seem to have had an experience of working with a teacher who is not willing to "buy in" to the school rules, but she is learning about the way that the gaze in the school is used, and authoring herself in order to be able to marry it to her internally persuasive discourse. She seems to be able to use the school's authoritative discourse that "in order to be an outstanding school" all teachers need to be "willing to go the extra mile" in the same way that she is, so that she can author herself as a senior leader. Jasmine says that she does not want to be sat in a room of senior leaders talking about things that she does not believe in, but does not rule out a management role so much as note that she would need to find this elsewhere. She is not only judging the manager's meetings, but also the topics that are discussed in those meetings, and the school's authoritative discourse on what is or is not important.

Jasmine's assessment of the leadership meetings also links to how the gaze extends to data, which are used as a way of seeing how well teachers are doing. Here all three teachers

seem to have positive data, which Jasmine and Sarah talk about specifically, and Stephanie talks about in terms of how well her classes are doing, and in particular her successes with Jordan. This is important, as regardless of whether these teachers resist or appropriate data and the way that they are used, these data mean that they are not placed in what Ball describes as a “weak market” (Ball, 2003: 225), or at least not according to the data that indicate pupil performance. Nevertheless, data are only a part of the authoritative discourses that teachers use to self-assess and all three participants seem to use them, along with the gaze for semiotic mediation (Vygotsky, 1978: 40), so that they are used in order to direct their actions “on intimate terrain”. Jasmine describes how she does not value data if it seems to be assessing what she views as unimportant, and chooses not to use it to label her pupils, but Stephanie and Sarah seem to be happy to use data to track pupil success. For Stephanie, the problem is not the data so much as that she would like to be seen as a person who can manipulate these data to see “what is working” for her pupils, her department and the school. Data offered a path to promotion and for her voice to be heard as part of the senior leadership team, and now that this has been denied she is reconsidering her options. For Sarah, data include observations from walkabouts, so that they are not just about examination results, which she also describes as very important, but also her judgements, and those that are made about other teachers by senior leaders.

All three participants are incredibly aware of their performance and who is assessing them, but they are also aware of the performance of others as they in turn assess them. In this way the school is more complex than the panopticon, as these teachers can see the

observers, and their data and they can also observe and use the gaze and these data to decide on how to act in the future.

This finding moves teachers away from self-regulating according to “an automatic functioning of power” towards including their own personal judgements of who holds positions of power and what value is apportioned to it. Consequently, power is dispersed and there is still a space for agency as the figurative good teacher is defined not only by teaching standards, the Ofsted criteria or other aspects of the performative discourse, but also the internally persuasive discourse of each individual teacher. This is in keeping with Ball’s suggestion that the reading of Foucault in Education Studies stresses the “impossibility of freeing oneself from power relations” but that “subjectivity, ethics, resistance and freedom are interwoven in complex and multi-layered ways” so that we constantly interrupt ourselves to understand the way that we are governed in order to be able to act differently (Ball, 2013b: 146). I would argue that Ball’s body of work can be described similarly, and that understanding heteroglossia and a space for self-authoring link well with his interpretation of the “re-writing of the self” as “the process of resistance and liberation are in part, in the modern context, processes of knowing and caring for the self” (Ball, 2013b: 146).

Jasmine in particular seems to work hard, through semiotic mediation and self-authoring, at knowing and caring for herself. Stephanie also tries to do so, when she ventures outside of the school where she works to look for some level of validation. Sarah has been able to find a way to know and care for herself within the school where she works. The process of Sarah

appropriating the school's authoritative discourse of those who do not stay are those who did not fully commit to "our unwritten mottos" of "doing whatever it takes" and "were never going to" is important to her story. More important though, is that she is aware that she "has benefitted" from appropriating the school values and that she will continue to do so, as she is telling a story of being "liberated" from a very different story of her brother's academic failure to "a path to success" through learning how to benefit from the opportunities that she has been given.

## 8.2 How do teachers develop their professional identities at the interface of potentially competing personal and professional discourses?

All three teachers describe hard-won standpoints (Holland et al., 2001: 4) when they tell their story of what it is like to be a teacher in a secondary school. They also tell a personal story of how they became a teacher and the reasons that they are still there. It is this history-in-person, the way that they are positioned and their internally persuasive discourses that lead to each participant telling a different story about how they experience being a teacher and how they respond. For these teachers, the performative discourse is understood and described as an authoritative discourse within the figured world of their school, but for each, this authoritative discourse has had to be addressed in terms of their own internally persuasive discourse. This is in keeping with Priestley et al.'s argument that teachers bring their life and professional histories as well as their short and long term aspirations to the environment in which they work (Priestley et al., 2015: 3) and Sach's argument that teacher professional identity is "mediated by their own experience in schools

and outside of schools as well as their own beliefs and values about what it means to be a teacher and the type of teacher they aspire to be" (Sachs, 2001: 154).

The interface (Holland et al., 2001: 32) is where the personal and professional authoritative discourses meet, and it is here that, according to Holquist, the teachers "must respond" (Holquist, 2002:46). For each teacher, their response incorporates the competing voices that they hear from the important figures in their professional and personal lives. They must then author themselves using their own inner voice, and on occasion they make a stand, by pushing up against the authoritative discourses in the school. For each of these teachers, their hard-won stand points have been relayed in terms of whether or not their face fits and actions that they have taken in order to negotiate their position.

For Stephanie, her hard-won standpoint in the past, was leaving her previous school in order to be able to be promoted. She needed to be seen as someone who could take on an important leadership role, and when she first arrived at Waterside, she achieved this. She is now finding herself in this same position, as she is overlooked for promotion, but is struggling to fight this same battle again, and this leaves her conflicted. She has tried within Waterside to earn this hard-won standpoint again, but has been overlooked for automatic promotion, and has not been offered opportunities to meet the criteria for the new post that was internally advertised. Stephanie is lacking in confidence this time around and whilst she resists being positioned as not promotable, she is starting to identify with this position, whilst wondering what she might be able to achieve outside of the school and tentatively looking outside of it to see if this might be possible.



For Sarah, her hard-won standpoint is to be seen to fit into the environment that she is in, and to be able to position herself as lucky within it. This is a recurrent theme in her life story. Sarah has achieved this “lucky” position in her new school, first through being classed as an outstanding teacher and then through accepting advice and unpaid then paid positions of responsibility, which have led to her becoming an assistant headteacher. Now that Sarah attends leadership meetings, she has needed to find an authorial voice as a leader in a school where not everybody’s face fits. It is here that there are contradictions, as she cannot position herself as lucky without noting that others were not, and she therefore starts to talk about “buying in” to the school’s approach. Sarah has bought in, because she strongly believes, given her past, that education can change lives and provide opportunities, and her IPD tells her that she should take her opportunities and work hard to make a success of herself.

When Sarah stories herself as lucky, she belies the hard work that she puts in to fitting in, of being able to see “what others seem to do”, then follow suit and act accordingly. Sarah refers to the world that she is from as a direct contrast to the one that she is in now, and she uses binaries and counter stories a great deal to position herself as fortunate. She tells the story of “landing” in the school as the reason that she is fortunate, but this does not fit the counter argument of those that did not manage to make a success of themselves in the same school. It is here that the hard work story comes through, and it is here that she reveals that she has actually fought for this good fortune. She rejects the concept of choosing to be lucky, but she makes it clear that her luck is due to her accepting and using

the opportunities she has been given and choosing to “buy in” to the school’s ethos. Sarah’s ability to marry her IPD with the school’s authoritative discourse allows her to position herself as fortunate and this is, in part, because the school has very good examination results, so that the performative discourse helps her to see the pupils and teachers who choose to conform as also making a success of themselves.

Jasmine’s hard-won standpoint is to be able to be seen as an artist as well as a teacher. When she has spoken about her excitement in teaching, it has always been about her passion for the lessons that she is teaching, and her subject. For Jasmine, becoming a school leader at Eden did not fit into her professional identity as an artist, as she says that she would be talking about things that she did not believe in. The way that Jasmine rejects data seems to be a part of this, as although she states that “you’re responsible for how [kids] progress” and that she looks at data to see “where they have come from [and] where have they got to get to” she talks about data as a potentially negative label on pupils, such as “she’s an E grade anyway, so she’s not going to do great” that can prevent the teacher from seeing their pupils’ potential. Here she explicitly states that she “does not believe in that” and that “it’s almost a waste of time ... because what would you do differently?”. Jasmine’s rejection of data then is the way that they can limit the pupil, so she found a way to move from a data driven environment to one where artwork was created to be displayed. The discourse is still performative, it is still about how the school looks, but it is one that fits with her IPD and her identity as an artist first and then a teacher, and of celebrating achievements through displaying the actual artwork and “passion” of her pupils.

For all three teachers, their hard-won standpoints relate to their professional identities, but this does not mean that they are happy with the way that these identities are forming. The figurative identity of the teacher is important to the way that they perceive themselves, and this is linked to the teacher that they aspire to be (Sachs, 2001: 154). It is also linked to the standard plot of the good teacher and their history-in-person (Holland et al., 2001: 18). This is a space to author the self where the teachers that they were taught by, the teacher they have been in the past and the type of teacher that they feel that they are at the moment (Priestley et al., 2015: 17; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 962) can be used to decide how to become the teacher that they would like to be.

The picture given by these three participants is not one of teachers selling their souls to the performative discourse or choosing to leave. Instead, they seem to be working with their figurative identity as a good teacher and the one that they form whilst in role, which is their “self-in-practice” (Holland et al., 2001: 32) through self-authoring and semiotic mediation. All three participants discuss where there are conflicts and struggles as they try to marry personal and professional discourses, so that they can identify as the teacher that they would like to be and then act accordingly. This is the interface where we see how the internal and external gaze, from wherever they perceive it to be, mingles with the performative discourse and affects their ability to self-author according to the now accepted “Ofsted” definition of what “good” actually means. Their professional and personal discourses meet at this interface, where they are forced to respond by authoring themselves and creating an “authorial stance” on what being a good teacher actually means to them. For these teachers this interface seems to be where contract and covenant meet

rather than where one replaces the other (Bernstein, 2000: 89). Where their internally persuasive discourses sit comfortably with other professional and performative discourses there is no conflict, but where they do not, they must decide whether to appropriate, resist or reject parts of them. Sarah appropriates through “buying in” to these discourses; Jasmine rejects them through finding a new way to be a teacher and Stephanie has not yet decided how to move forward. She is resisting, but could either appropriate a new identity as “not good enough” or once again look outside of her school. Stephanie could then reject the “not good enough” part of her identity that she is struggle to appropriate and realign her figurative and positional identities as a good teacher elsewhere.

### 8.3 In what ways do teachers describe how performative discourses and practices position them, and do they also provide teachers with the resources to respond?

Jasmine describes how the performative discourse positions her as doing well when she describes a session about “closing the gap” for those pupils who are classed as socially disadvantaged and who therefore receive additional pupil premium funding. Her “data” were used to show how the gap wasn’t really visible in her classes. The performative discourse here positions Jasmine positively, but she rejects it as she does not find it useful. For Jasmine, the data that are used, and the way that pupils are labelled in terms of grades, such as an “E student” or socioeconomic status, such as “pupil premium”, do not affect the way that she works with them. She talks about pupils in terms of how much passion they have and how data on whether or not they are socially disadvantaged cannot indicate whether they are good at Art or not. For Jasmine data are reductive as they can’t tell her

how to form a relationship with a pupil and instead, they can position the student as not being able to achieve higher than the grades that the data predict.

Stephanie talks about data in very different terms. She talks about how they can be used to show whether or not what a teacher is doing is working for a pupil, and how she used to be able to predict exactly how well her department would perform in their high stakes GCSE examinations. Here Stephanie uses the performative discourse and data in order to position herself, but has found that educational reform has made this more difficult. Changes to the way that pupils are assessed mean changes to her ability to create and use data to make predictions, as she does not yet know what the criteria will be. She has responded by making estimates on where the grade boundaries will be and arguing that the way that progress is tracked within her school should be different. Nevertheless, Stephanie's IPD tells her that data can be tracked and that pupil performance can be predicted.

The uncertainty that Stephanie experienced in this interview, whilst the GCSEs changed from being assessed in terms of grades to numbers, affected the way that she positioned herself as a Head of Department. She drew on her history-in-person as someone who could estimate what the data would look like in order to provide stability and support for her department, but it resulted in sleepless nights as she worried that she might have made mistakes. It may be that her lack of professional confidence is so profound as her uncertainty is linked to "new initiatives" that Helsby and McCulloch argue leave teachers feeling "always underdeveloped and unsatisfactory" (Helsby and McCulloch, 1996: 65),

particularly as at the time of the interview Maths and English were the only two subjects to go through this high stakes change.

Stephanie believes that the data will tell a story of how well the school and her department is doing, and she seems to believe that it will be a true story, despite issues with classroom behaviour and having no experience of how grade boundaries will be set. For Stephanie, the issue is not the performative discourse, or that data are used to show how well a teacher is doing, but the uncertainty during this time of change and also the way that data are collected and used in order to tell this story. It is here that she struggles, as she claims that she can see ways to use the data to respond to educational reform and uncertainty, but she is not in a position of authority to do so. Delving further, Stephanie was once extremely confident in her ability to make data predictions, and this has come undone due to educational reform at a time when the school has rejected her ideas on how to use data, or to enable her to apply for a senior role where she would be responsible for data and assessment for the whole school. Stephanie can see ways to use data to respond to the performative discourse, and to create ways of making it visible that “what she is doing is working” but instead she is being measured by someone else in a different way. Her path to becoming the senior leader that she aspires to be (Sachs, 2001: 154) is restricted, and with it her “capacity for agency” (Priestley et al., 2015: 3) within her school so that she does not feel able to respond and position herself differently.

Sarah is positioned as an outstanding teacher with excellent GCSE results. One of the reasons that she gives for this position is the amount of contact time she has with her year

nine GCSE class. Now that Sarah is a member of the SLT she teaches fewer classes and is therefore under less pressure to perform. Instead, she is one of the people who must ensure that others are working well. Through promotion, Sarah is now positioned differently in relation to the performative discourse in her school. She gets to judge rather than be judged, and to feed this information back to the rest of the leadership team. Sarah is able to position herself as a leader as a direct result of the performative discourse. In attaining “outstanding” results and being seen, not only as an outstanding teacher, but also as someone who “buys in” to the school’s way of doing things, she has used the resources available to her to remove the pressures of being observed and of having as many classes who need to perform.

For all three participants, being positioned as having a face that fits is important to their prospects of promotion, and this is seen by all three as being important to the standard plot of the school, and their own IPDs of where a good teacher ends up, if they are doing well. Both Stephanie and Jasmine have struggled to find promotion as a way to use the performative discourse to position themselves. Jasmine refused the one opportunity at Eden that she was given to apply for a promotion, and Stephanie has felt excluded from these opportunities at Waterside.

For Jasmine, her rejection of the opportunity to apply for a promotion and her rejection of being a senior leader and sitting in a room talking about things that she does not believe in, means that she has worked on finding something outside of her school. Through semiotic mediation, such as the self-help tapes that she describes, she has worked hard to gain an

authorial stance as both an artist and as a teacher, and explored alternatives to being a teacher not only at Eden, but also as a secondary school teacher. Sarah has worked hard at gaining an authorial stance as a leader, finding a way to describe the teachers that have not found success at Pegai as not “buying in” or not working hard enough.

Stephanie is caught in her crab bucket which has similarities to Eisner’s caged bird analogy (Eisner, 1992: 617). She seems to be offering support to others to get out of Waterside through semiotic mediation to use the performative discourse and her understanding of it to help advantage others. These are her staff that have gone on to gain promotions elsewhere, and the pupils, like Jordan that she feels she is able to make a difference to. What Stephanie does not have, however, is a sponsor, a person who can help her to be positioned differently at Waterside, or to help her to position herself as a leader elsewhere. For Stephanie this is a position that she needs in order to see herself in terms of success, and as good enough. She therefore uses the position she has to help others, but feels unable to help herself. Stephanie uses the resources available to her to maintain her position as a good HoD, but some of her improvisations, such as complaining to the previous headteacher about how promotions were given by saying things that were “not repeatable”, do not help her and can actively work against her “social claim” to being positioned as a senior leader at Waterside.

Both Sarah and Jasmine find ways to be considered successful in their schools whilst appropriating or rejecting the school’s authoritative and performative discourses. In resisting however, Stephanie finds herself disappointed and unable to make her face fit.



She is starting to see her options as either appropriating an identity that incorporates feeling that she is “not that good”, or rejecting it and leaving the school. Leaving teaching, however, is not a viable option for Stephanie.

All three teachers talk about the performative discourse, both in terms of being a teacher and pupil results, and also in terms of promotion. The way they choose to respond varies, and they show that you can appropriate data and still struggle within the performative discourse, or you can reject it and still be seen to be doing well. What is evident for all, is that success is defined in terms of their internally persuasive discourse, and their beliefs in what a good teacher is. These are co-developed with the performative discourse, and there is no point in the stories that they tell, that there seems to be a conflict between “contract and covenant”.

The performative discourse is a part of the way that the participants form their professional identity, but they do not all seem to form an entrepreneurial identity (Sachs, 2001: 149) from it. Whilst for Sarah, taking opportunities and doing what others seem to be doing is very much a part of how she has become a senior leader, Stephanie has not been able to position herself in the way that she would have liked. It may be that she has a more “democratic” (Sachs, 2001: 149; Hargreaves, 2000: 167) approach to being a teacher, as she talks in great detail about the support that she gives to others, and times in her career when she has felt supported. Nevertheless, Keddie states that “entrepreneurial professionalism does not necessarily undermine a focus on students and does not necessarily compromise teacher autonomy and criticality” (Keddie, 2017: 1247). This can be seen in the way that

Sarah aligns herself with the performative discourse, and the school's authoritative discourse and the similarities in how Stephanie and Sarah describe the good teacher.

Jasmine is both democratic and entrepreneurial, in that she describes relationships with staff and even her husband as integral to her life as a teacher, but also how teaching for her has at times been linked to the safety of the pay cheque. Jasmine's entrepreneurial attitude is more evident in the way that she works on herself and looks for different ways to be a teacher and an artist. She "makes a success of herself" (Ball, 2003: 219) not by becoming a manager, or selling her soul to the "terrors of performativity" (Ball, 2003: 215), but rather she defines her own terms of success and then through self-help books; pep talks to herself and practising for interviews; she uses semiotic mediation in order to do the work that she loves. Jasmine has found a way to reject many aspects of the performative discourse, and to move away from a data driven environment to one where how a school looks when there is good art work on display, can be used to position a school as outstanding. To do this, Jasmine did a lot of identity work to figure out where her IPD and the professional and performative discourses could meet. When she found a way to gain an authorial stance on the sort of teacher that she wanted to be, she was able to create her "dream job" in a different school sector by selling this vision to the headteacher in her interview. This is entrepreneurial, but not in the ways that Sachs (2001) describes. Instead this shows how a teacher can find where along the margins and interstices of the performative discourse, and with the resources that it offers, a way to use their own internally persuasive discourse to acquire an authorial stance which they can use to position themselves differently.

#### 8.4 Where, along the margins and interstices of the performative discourse, how and with what difficulties, do teachers choose how to act?

Holland et al. describe how it is possible to use your understandings of an authoritative discourse in order to be able to find spaces to use it in order to choose how to act differently. These are the margins and interstices (Holland et al., 2001:278) of the discourse that can be found at the edges and within it to find ways to act differently.

The performative discourse has been presented as a way to ensure that teachers are effective (Lyotard, 1984; M. Power, 1997; Strathern, 2000). For these participants, they have first needed to define what being effective as a teacher means to them. For Sarah, the performative discourse allows pupils to be able to succeed academically. She describes how the school's performance in league tables positions the school as outstanding, in the same way that her performance as a teacher with high exam results positions her as outstanding. For Sarah, the performative discourse is a part of being a teacher, and she chooses to act within it. She argues that the school's strict guidelines on pupils wearing their uniforms correctly or its high exclusion rate allows those that are willing to "buy in", be that teachers, pupils or their parents, to be successful and this is represented in their GCSE grades. Sarah does not seem to have difficulties in choosing how to act within the performative discourse, but she is finding it more difficult to story herself as fortunate rather than hard-working when she uses 'landing' in her school as a reason for her good luck.

Sarah says that her role as an Assistant Headteacher offers her greater autonomy over her workload and her story is one of taking opportunities when they are offered. She does not

just work along the margins and the interstices, but also within the expectations of the performative discourse. She accepts advice that is offered and chooses not to notice that colleagues are forced to leave, rather than doing so of their own volition until this is pointed out explicitly to her by the senior leadership team that she is now a part of. These are the margins that she initially chose to ignore, as they “did not concern me” at the time, but that she now has to find a way to incorporate into her internally persuasive discourse on how to be a senior leader and on being lucky by “landing” in her school.

For Sarah, it is important that she positions herself away from the boundaries and interstices that others need to operate in, so that she can be seen to fit in fully. She calls this pragmatism, but it seems to be that she is able to use the school’s authoritative discourse, which is one of ensuring good academic performance, in order to choose how to act. Sarah specifically notes that this works best when the entire school acts collectively, so that the smaller issues, such as behaviour that affects the learning of others, and pupils subverting the rules by wearing their uniform incorrectly, are responded to in the same way by everyone. Sarah uses her belief that education is a means to making a success of yourself, and that learning to conform will set you up for a better life to support this claim. For Sarah, this means “buying in” to the performative discourse, and making this apparent in the way that she chooses to act.

Stephanie and Jasmine both talk about their motivations to “make a difference” as a teacher, and both describe their relationships with other members of staff, and with their pupils. These motivations echo those described as reasons to teach and to stay in teaching

in recent studies (Perryman and Calvert, 2019; Towers and Maguire, 2017). Relationships and making a difference are key to how both talk about their classroom, and of how much they are able to enjoy teaching.

Jasmine talks about how she is able to focus on pupils enjoying lessons and on reacting to pupils' individual needs, rather than the data that are used to define them. She states that she looks at these data to see where they have come from and where they need to get to, but not to see what she actually needs to do with the pupils. Instead, she looks to see passion in their work, and can completely overlook the grades that she has to predict, as well as the label that is attached to the pupil through these data, by instead engaging with her pupils directly. This allows Jasmine to work within the performative discourse without prioritising it, and it also allows her to act in the way that she wants to act towards her pupils.

Jasmine also chooses to use the margins and interstices to give herself time when needed, in order to make decisions on what she wants to do next, and where her priorities lie. This can be seen when she chooses not to act when she is invited to apply for a promotion at her school. Here, it is not so much that Jasmine resisted all forms of promotion, rather she resisted it at a certain point in her life as well as resisting what this promotion would mean at Eden. Jasmine makes decisions that are based on her internally persuasive discourse of doing what you believe in. She can create lessons that she is proud of, and even get excited about the homework that she has prepared for students, but she has to believe in what she is doing, or she finds an alternative. Jasmine seems to reject the performative discourse, as

although she believes that teachers are responsible for pupil progress and the grades that they attain, she talks about this in terms of commitment and passion which are hard to quantify. Jasmine finds the margins and the interstices to work alongside the performative discourse, but ultimately rejects a data driven role for one where she is positioned as successful based on the Art displayed around her new school.

Stephanie, like Sarah believes in helping pupils to achieve academic success through learning how to behave both inside and outside of the school. She says that she was motivated to become a teacher so that she could help others to believe in themselves, particularly as she found Maths difficult at school, but was encouraged to keep trying. Using Jordan as an example, she describes how she has built a relationship with him, so that he has slowly learnt what is required in an examination, and how this has resulted in him getting one of the top marks in a recent test. Similarly, Stephanie describes members of her department who she has encouraged to apply for promotions in other schools, and who have been successful. Unlike Jasmine, Stephanie does not struggle with the concept of data indicating performance, but she does struggle with data being used in ways that she does not believe show what is actually taking place. Her confidence with data becomes apparent when she describes how she would monitor if what is taking place in the classroom can be seen to be making a difference for pupils. Stephanie is looking for an authorial voice, so that data can be used to show where this difference is taking place, but she has not been able to position herself in her school in order for this voice to be heard. It is here that her position in the school and the way that her school uses the performative discourse,

including aspiration to leadership positions, limit how Stephanie can choose to act (Priestley et al., 2015: 111).

Stephanie has found ways to gain confidence and to encourage herself that she is “not that bad actually” by going out to CPD courses. This is where Stephanie works at the margins and the interstices of the performative discourse. She finds that her voice is heard, and that others say that she has made a good point, and in doing so she momentarily builds her confidence. This could be seen, using her metaphor, as popping her head out of the crab bucket and looking outside. What is most remarkable about Stephanie is that although there is no positive figure for her within Waterside, that she continues to try to be one for others. She seems to have found a role within the crab bucket to help others, and to make a difference to the pupils and staff that are willing to accept this help. Unfortunately for Stephanie, her struggle and resistance to the way that she feel that she has been positioned as not promotable have not created a space for agency to leave and gain promotion, so much as a space to notice that she is “feeling low” but not feeling confident enough to propel herself out of the bucket. Her agency then, is found in helping others and building up her confidence by attending courses where other teachers reassure her that she actually does know what she is talking about.

Each teacher has found their own way to work within or alongside the performative discourse, and this is very much related to how it meets their internally persuasive discourse. They each find a way to act, and they make choices according to the ways that their IPD and the performative discourse may or may not meet. It is here that the margins

and the interstices become apparent. Each teacher finds a way to respond to the performative discourse and the way that they are positioned by it. Sarah chooses to appropriate it entirely, Jasmine chooses to reject it, and Stephanie is caught believing in it, whilst not believing in the way that it is enacted in her school. For each teacher their history-in-person and their aspirations have an impact on how they respond to the performative discourse, and where they find spaces to work with or against it.

This means that in terms of counter agency (Prior, 2009: 29) Sarah finds way to revise the performative discourse, Jasmine rejects it, and Stephanie resists aspects of it, but Stephanie is not able to find a way to resist and make her face fit and this creates tensions for her. For Sarah, counter agency has not been as necessary for her as the other two teachers, as she has been able to marry her “individual, context-specific and emotionally and morally charged assessment” (Prior, 2009: 22) of the school’s authoritative discourse with her own IPD without describing much tension. For Jasmine, the ability to appropriate, resist or reject aspects of the performative and her school’s authoritative discourse are tied into how she sees her professional identity as being both an artist and a teacher. Where she is rejecting data and continuing to work at Eden, she is choosing how to act, but this comes with a great deal of identity work. Her choices are made through actively seeking out different discourses, such as “live your legend, do the work you love” and sifting through what she does and does not enjoy about her role so that she can consider an alternative. This counter agency is important to Jasmine, and it propels her forward. For Stephanie however, it seems that resistance and refusal are not helping her. She actively rejects not only the data tracking that the new Assistant Head of Assessment and Data implements, but also



rejects him as not being qualified for the role. Resistance and rejection in the past created rupture for Stephanie that propelled her into action, but now at Waterside these acts of counter agency are preventing her not only from being able to “buy in” but also from positioning herself as someone who can be seen to do so. What this means for Stephanie is that she uses the margins and the interstices in order to help others, but she does not use them in order to help herself. Whilst Sarah was offered opportunities to find promotions, and Jasmine found ways to create a new role for herself, Stephanie seems to feel the “impossibility of freeing oneself from power relations” (Ball, 2013b: 146) as even though she can see ways to support others to position themselves differently, she is struggling to find a way to act differently so that she can help herself.

### 8.5 Can teachers be considered as agentic?

The teachers in this study describe the performative discourse as a part of working in a secondary school, but they do not describe it in terms of terrors on their soul. Each teacher describes the way that they form their professional identity with their internally persuasive discourse and the authoritative discourses in their school. Performativity, managerialism and the market (Ball, 2003: 215) are all described by the teachers as parts of the school’s discourse, but they each have different responses to them as they draw on their history-in person and their aspirations in order to choose who they are now and how they choose to act. Far from describing “a set of dualisms and tensions” or “values schizophrenia” (Ball, 2003: 221) they describe the “overlap and complexity of teacher professionalism (Keddie, 2017: 1247) and ways to “interrupt themselves ... in order to be able to act differently” (Ball, 2013a: 146).

Despite Sarah seeming to ventriloquate the school's authoritative discourse, and Stephanie feeling trapped inside her crab bucket, all three teachers are negotiating their identities based on their experiences in and out of the school and their own beliefs and values about what it means to be a teacher (Sachs, 2001: 154). In the stories that these teachers tell, they do not come across as docile bodies, and they do not seem to have replaced "contract with covenant" (Bernstein, 2000: 89). Even when these teachers choose not to act differently, they are still making choices, and they are still agentic. For example, Stephanie chooses to resist the way that she is being positioned, by resisting the authority of the new Assistant Head of Assessment and Data, and she also chooses to venture outside of the school for training sessions in order to find some reassurance that she can contribute to important discussions, if only for short bursts right now. Similarly, Sarah may appropriate the school's authoritative discourse, but she does so by considering how others seem to experience being a teacher elsewhere. Sarah is constantly weighing up her experience of being a teacher compared to others, and this means that she is aware of making a choice, not only to feel lucky, but to appropriate the discourse as it fits with her IPD. Jasmine, even though she appears to be agentic by creating a new role for herself in a different school, has incorporated being a teacher, and the financial security that this brings, with identifying as an artist.

All three teachers are able to find forms of agency along the margins and the interstices of the performative discourse of what a good teacher looks like, even whilst they are also restricted by it. What is important though is that this is not the only discourse that they

experience, and they author themselves according to multiple voices and discourses as they are heteroglossic. These teachers do not experience “values schizophrenia” (Ball, 2003: 221), rather their values are wrapped up within their personal internally persuasive discourses. This means that they choose to co-develop with different discourses, and they work on their identities as they do so, so that they are constantly making choices. These choices become more visible when using a Figured Worlds lens to analyse the stories of these teachers, but this does not mean that the performative discourse fades into the background. The teachers in this study have chosen how much priority to give to performative acts, and to make choices on how they define themselves as teachers within the performative discourse, rather than it defining them.

The participants in this study then, through the stories that they have told, create a rich picture of how teachers are constantly answering and addressing authoritative discourses and that they author themselves through using their inner voice and find ways to act using semiotic mediation. This means that “value does not replace values” but that teachers must find their own way to author themselves and their values in a performative environment.

In the next chapter I will discuss how exploring the lived experience of the teacher through their personal stories has created a way to explore the effects of the performative discourse on their professional identities and capacity to act with agency and the implication of these findings.

# 9 Conclusion

## 9.1 Contribution to Knowledge

The purpose of this thesis was to challenge the way teachers are represented in “The Teacher’s Soul and the Terrors of Performativity” (Ball, 2003), whilst still noting the importance of the paper and the way that it describes the performative discourse that has become a part of what it means to be a teacher.

One reason for challenging the representation of teachers as either “docile bodies” or “technicians of behaviour” where there is “no room for caring” (Ball, 2003: 219, 224) is that the paper is still widely read and cited. I have become concerned that this representation was becoming a new authoritative discourse to describe teachers, but that it was not an accurate one.

Ball has gone on to describe how he has moved towards an understanding of ways that teachers can “re-write the self”, but nevertheless, the extant literature that refer to “performativity” also positions the teacher as governed in some way (Ball, 2013a: 142), so that teacher agency and performativity seem to be placed as binary opposites. This thesis counters this representation of the teacher and argues that teachers co-develop with the performative discourse, through answering it.

This thesis adds to the literature that presents teachers as complex and moves away from the Foucauldian lens that is frequently used (Ball, 2013a: 142), to explore how teachers

negotiate their identities and find ways to act within “specific, often socially powerful, cultural discourses and practices” (Holland et al., 2001: 32). The move from Foucault is deliberate, despite Ball finding spaces in his later writing to explore the freedoms that teachers can find within the performative discourse. Exploring performativity through a different theoretical lens permits new ways of seeing teachers and new ways to understand how they respond to the performative discourse. This study has found that teachers make very personal and values driven decisions as they choose how to respond to the authoritative discourses of their schools, and in particular the performative discourse. It shows the spaces where these teachers are in the process of writing and re-writing the self (Ball, 2013b: 146) by looking at “the process of resistance and liberation” (ibid). This is through considering teachers as heteroglossic and moving away from the monologic way of describing teacher’s in Ball’s 2003 paper. More than this, it allows teachers who are conducting their own research to describe themselves and the struggles that they face in a different way, as the theoretical framework has given me agency to describe myself, and the participants in this study in ways that did not seem to be available to me when using Ball’s paper.

## 9.2 Implications for Practice

The importance of finding a way to add depth to the way that teachers are represented in “The Teacher’s Soul and the Terrors of Performativity” is important, as it is a text that we use to introduce the concept of performativity to Masters in Education students.

I am now an award lead for a part-time Masters in Education, and this means that I have had to decide whether or not to retire the paper, or to find a way to use it that I am comfortable with. Many of my students are teachers, and I have found that it is still relevant, that some still have an emotional reaction to it, and that it still offers a vocabulary to describe aspects of teaching practice.

I have found ways to use “The Teachers Soul” to create a rich conversation about what “performativity” is and how my students experience it, but also as a way to explore what it means to be a teacher and whether or not they are able to make choices within the performative discourse. This means that, for me, the paper is still relevant, and that it is still important for my students to understand the meanings that are carried with the term “performativity” from this specific paper, and from Ball’s more recent writing.

I have found a way to confront the contradiction presented in Ball’s dichotomy of selling my soul or leaving the profession by carrying out this study, and using my findings in a different type of classroom and a different sector. This also means that I have been able to negotiate my professional identity as a teacher, and add aspects of myself as a lecturer and an aspiring researcher, as I continue to question what performativity is and what it does. I am still answering and addressing this discourse, I am still using Ball’s paper to help me, and continue to use and adapt my internally persuasive discourse so that I find a space to author myself as I do so. More than this though, my students will find their own way to respond to the Teacher’s Soul and The Terrors of Performativity, and through writing this thesis, I can guide them to a variety of academic literature, in order for them to do so.

### 9.3 Limitations

This thesis is limited in words, which means that I have had to draw boundaries around the study. I have not explored Foucault or Bourdieu in the detail that I would have liked, and similarly, I have not explored Ball's body of work as a whole. The research would have benefitted from greater depth in these areas and others, such as teacher professionalism, how policies are written and how political ideology impacts on the ways that teachers can choose to teach.

Another limitation, despite this being an active choice, is that the stories in this thesis were based on just one interview. This means that I did not return to ask further questions, and that I could only tell their stories based on the information that they were willing to share in the first instance. There could be spaces in this study to explore "positions and markers that cut across Figured Worlds" (Holland et al., 2001: 129), such as race, class, age, gender and religion but they were not mentioned as major themes in the stories that I was told.

Returning to ask further questions would have given me an opportunity to see if these were areas that the participants wanted to talk about, and this could provide some important information which is not included in this study. In a similar vein, I approached both men and women to participate in this study, but did not manage to find a male voice, which might have been of interest to the study.

I also think that I could have offered the participants, through returning for further interviews, an opportunity to talk about how they perceive their professional identity and

whether or not they feel that they have agency, and to show me artefacts that represent what being a teacher means to them. I still believe that a life history approach would be a good methodological approach to this study, and note that there are still possibilities to conduct further interviews with Stephanie, Sarah and Jasmine in the future.

My own story is also limited, as I have shared aspects of what it felt like to be a teacher retrospectively. I kept a reflective diary for the final three years of teaching, so that many of these thoughts were captured as I was experiencing them. Nevertheless, my teacher's voice has mingled with my researcher's voice, which means that I have not told the story of a teacher who has left the profession, rather I have used my story to explore why this study is important to me. Perhaps at times it is a little too personal, and could benefit from greater distance, even whilst I note that much of the body of literature that describes "performativity" in schools is written by academics, whereas this has been written as I have gone through the process of trying to become one. At times I may have been a little too close to, and at others a little too far removed from the stories of the teachers, as it is difficult to write about something that is dear to your heart (Downs, 2017: 459) objectively.

## 9.4 Future Research

The limitations to this study are areas that I would like to address in future research. I would like to write with some of my current students, to show how they feel that performativity is affecting them as teachers and how they choose to respond to it. I would also like to conduct a study that considers the male teacher's voice to explore whether or not teacher identity and agency is experienced differently by men and women, or whether



gender is becoming less and less important in how people position themselves at a time when gender is no longer seen in binary terms.

I would also like to explore different ways that teachers are represented beyond academic writing, and to capture a more holistic picture of what it means to be a teacher. This might mean moving away from writing about the performative discourse, and looking at other important authoritative discourses that they are experiencing as a part of their professional lives.

To conclude, this study is not complete, in the same way that identities are never complete or fixed. It is an attempt to capture the lived experience of being a teacher and to explore how the performative discourse impacts on this experience at a certain point in time. It offers ways to see teachers beyond those described by Ball in 2003, and allows them, through their own stories to be considered as complex, agentic and able to retain their own personal and professional values.

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# Appendix A



## Participant Information Sheet

**Study Title:** Beyond the terrors of performativity: Exploring Teacher Agency in Neoliberal Times

### Invitation

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

### What is the purpose of the study?

The study will look at how teachers perceive the way that they are portrayed and perceived by others within their local school environment and how this fits with their own construction of their personal and professional identity. It will look at the strain of a performative culture on teacher identity and will explore how teachers react to this.

### Why have I been invited?

You have been teaching in a secondary comprehensive school for a number of years and have experienced the role of the teacher in your life, and have had the opportunity to choose whether or not to incorporate this as a part of your identity. This study is interested in this experience, and your views on it.

### Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide. I will describe the study and go through the information sheet, which I will give to you. I will then ask you to sign a consent form to show you agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

### What will happen to me if I take part?

- You will be asked to take part in two interviews.
- The interviews will last for about an hour each.
- We will meet around May 2017 and October 2017, as a time and place that is convenient to you.
- I will record an interview with you, that will be transcribed. You will be given a copy of the transcript in order to comment, edit or delete where you may feel appropriate. The interview will be semi-structured in nature, so that we can discuss points of interest that come up during the conversation. These interviews will make up a case study on teacher identity, and its impact on the person. The case study will be anonymous.

### Expenses and payments?

There will be no payment for these interviews, but I will be willing to travel to minimise potential expense.

### What will I have to do?

You will meet me for two face to face interviews. We will discuss your role as a teacher and the impact that this may have on your personal life and sense of identity. We will also discuss your experiences of being a teacher and how this may have changed during your career.

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

It is unlikely that there will be any risks to taking part. You will remain anonymous in this study, and the interviews will ask about your professional role and how you relate to it. If for any reason you did not want to continue with the interview, you could stop it at any time, without explanation.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

We cannot promise the study will help you, but the information you share will help to increase the understanding of teacher identity in a performative culture.

**What if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researcher who will do their best to answer your questions on [c.goodley@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:c.goodley@mmu.ac.uk).

If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally you can do this through Cathy Lewin [c.lewin@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:c.lewin@mmu.ac.uk).

**Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential, and any information about you which leaves the university will have your name and address removed so that you cannot be recognised.

- Your interview will be recorded on a hand held device. The interview will be uploaded to a password protected computer accessed only by the researcher.
- The interviews will make up anonymous case studies that will be included in this thesis. They may also be included in subsequent academic journal articles based on the findings of this thesis.
- The researcher will have access to the recordings via a secure computer. Excerpts of the edited (by you) transcripts will be shared with supervisors, and may be included in the thesis.
- The data will be kept for until 2023, and will then be destroyed.

**What will happen if I don't carry on with the study?**

If you withdraw from the study I will destroy all your identifiable samples/ tape recorded interviews, but we will need to use the data collected up to your withdrawal.

**What will happen to the results of the research study?**

The results of the study will be published in my thesis. The information that you share will be presented as one of four anonymous case studies. When combined these will give a picture of how teachers are experiencing their role at present. You will not be identified in this thesis. It is possible that I will publish from this thesis in academic journals or conference presentations. You would be informed of these publications and invited to read them if these were of interest to you. Your identity would be anonymised in any publication, so that all information could not be traced back to you.

**Who is organising or sponsoring the research?**

This research forms part of my thesis. It is not sponsored.

**Further information and contact details:**

If you have any further questions, please contact Claire Goodley on [c.goodley@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:c.goodley@mmu.ac.uk) or call me on 01612472123.

# Appendix B



## Consent Form

Title of Project: Beyond the terrors of performativity: Exploring Teacher Agency in Neoliberal Times

Name of Researcher: Claire Goodley

Participant Identification Code for this project:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated 31<sup>st</sup> March for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the procedure.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason to the named researcher.
3. I understand that my responses will be sound recorded and used for analysis for this research project.
4. I understand that my responses will remain anonymous.
5. I agree to take part in the above research project.
6. I understand that at my request a transcript of my interview can be made available to me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

*To be signed and dated in presence of the participant*

*Once this has been signed, you will receive a copy of your signed and dated consent form and information sheet by post.*

# Appendix C

Stephanie HOD Maths 1

Her story?

FW as if world	Identity as a teacher / HOD / potential leader	Stephanie's standard plot	Actors	Performative discourse
<p>Need to lower expectations</p> <p>Relationships with pupils very important</p> <p>Changing demographic at school is changing relationships with pupils – they seem less keen to learn in KS3</p> <p>SMLT us and them</p> <p>Teacher needs to be in control – managing to teach 25 pupils means having 25 pupils who accept and conform to the rules – correct uniform, no piercing, no chewing, bring basic equipment, stay in classroom for lesson, agree to work when asked, show respect to teacher, do not use mobile in lesson. Pressure for teachers to check uniform and above, so this should still be enforced and should still be agreed on a school rules.</p>	<p>P2 Good teacher – hasn't lost mojo <i>at times</i></p> <p>Lowered expectation – this grates on her and others</p> <p>It's more infrequently that I have good classes and good lessons</p> <p>KS4 going well – I think I enjoy teaching them because I work hard at relationships KS4 they see I work hard for them to get the best grade possible.</p> <p>KS3 they see me as a hindrance not as someone who can help I stop them doing what they want: drinking lucozade being on their phones, chatting messing around</p> <p>Used to be a 'strong' teacher where pupils accepted school rules in her classroom. Used to be seen as authoritative – used to be respected by pupils. Dilemma – how much aggro to take on to maintain this – has it already</p>	<p>P1 if you spoke to anybody they would be feeling a bit down – stress gets to all teachers</p> <p>HOD needs to support department with behaviour</p> <p>Children can be challenging, argue and answer back.</p> <p>Staff can be absent and this impacts on pupil learning and grades as well as permanent staff (management) workload</p> <p>Job plus extra admin is draining</p> <p>A good teacher enforces school rules and is respected for doing so. A child does not chew, drink Lucozade, play on phone, walk in and out of lessons, expecting the lesson to pick up where you left or talk over the teacher.</p>	<p>Her – HOD of maths and teacher AHOD new and inexperienced, old easier for her.</p> <p>Jane – most experienced member of staff. She is struggling too (has been last 3-4 years. Struggles with children that answer back. Needs support too.</p> <p>Some children can be challenging, argue and answer back.</p> <p>Supply teachers – for supply he is very good</p> <p>SMLT not questioning why supply staff won't stay (acceptant of workload being too great. Complicit even? SMLT / school not responding to school's changing demographic of pupils.</p>	<p>P1 Pressure for high grades is less for pupils and more for how the school looks</p> <p>P1 need to check on new AHOD as has less initiative – stuff still needs doing and she has to ensure it is (implication it might be easier on her own timewise)</p> <p>When staff are off, the work is done by HOD, supply do enough, but planning and overseeing falls to HOD</p> <p>About SMLT I don't think they have (adapted to new pupils) I don't know who this 'they', but I don't think they know what to do with this type of pupil we are getting</p> <p>Sense of pupils watching to see what she is going to do when pupils are defiant</p>

<p>Teaching challenging classes, being consistently challenged is emotionally draining, and this can lead to errors – getting emotionally upset because perspective is lost.</p> <p>Teachers who become leaders cannot stay in the classroom.</p> <p>Pupils need to know what a pass grade is. During times of change, the HOD makes a call. They pretend they know, and they hope they are right, but they don't. They assume the role of expert, because an expert is needed.</p>	<p>gone. Senses pupils watching her to see if she is still strong / if she is one of the weak ones. Feels herself becoming weaker.</p> <p>The one with the answers – or the one to take responsibility for the answers. Predicting the % of pass grades, predicting the pass % with the new course. There is a responsibility to know, and a sense of bewilderment now that the grades are actually numbers and that the system is unknown and untested.</p>	<p>A pupil will agree to work for the teacher and will talk politely. They will not say 'nah mate, I'm not doing that'.</p> <p>A good manager takes care of their staff and ensures that they are well supported in and out of the classroom.</p> <p>A good leader ...</p> <p>I have been teaching for 27 years. I know what I am doing but at the same time, I no longer trust that I know what I am doing – I feel that I might not be that good any more.</p> <p>Has looked at jobs for other places but no longer feels good enough. Feels down trodden, and that she is accepting the 'narrative' about her.</p> <p>At her school, a number of staff on SMLT have been given jobs as their face fits.</p> <p>Her face does not fit.</p> <p>School is to set you up for life. The rules are there to do this.</p>	<p>New children from closed down school who are disaffected.</p> <p>Link / line manager who does not set deadlines but is not willing to let S decide which ones to do or in which order.</p> <p>The old headteacher</p> <p>The new headteacher</p> <p>People whose faces fit – new SMLT at school</p> <p>Pupils – J: as example</p> <p>Inexperienced staff in team</p> <p>Maths teacher for her own GCSE</p>	<p>There are times when I actually don't think that I'm that good, Claire. (use of my names feels important here).</p> <p>P5 Meetings with agreed tasks but I may choose to do 2 and 4 and then get 'wrist slapped' for not doing 1 and 3 but there was no deadline and this happens increasingly.</p> <p>, just general things within Education that came in. Like, we probably had a new specification came in, because we've had so many. Coursework went I think... erm the A* to C thing came in. All those.. all those external, you know, all these external pressures...</p> <p>there's an awful lot of internal pressure, but there's still a massive external pressure: changing the GCSE; erm, the 1-9 grading, you know? Kids are sitting examinations that we don't even know what a pass is going to be. All those kind of erm... unknowns...</p>
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Resistance	Positionality	Fabrication	Agency	metaphors
<p>About SMLT I don't think they have (adapted to new pupils) I don't know who this 'they', but I don't think they know what to do with this type of pupil we are getting</p> <p>Pupil resistance – not following rules. See page 3 open defiance.</p> <p>Going to extra training to remember that I can do it. To join in, to be a part of the education conversation. Finding free courses where teachers meet and where skills / knowledge can be kept up to date. (resisting particular school).</p> <p>About a teacher being given SMLT role just before he left "She's the one that was given an assistant head job, just before the headteacher left. And I went to see him about it, and erm, it's not repeatable what I said... when I said it to the previous head, he didn't speak to me for the next six months....</p>	<p>Caught in the middle (middle management) p1 supporting staff with behavioural issues middle of pupils and staff issue</p> <p>P2 supply – lots of support for supply teacher, but he isn't staying (workload implied) and SMLT are not questioning why this is the case.</p> <p>Being viewed from all sides. SMLT expect rules to be followed, but they are not being. Pupils (some) are wanting that fight, to get caught up in an argument with a teacher. Not in a position to help enforce rules throughout the school (so it is easier in her classroom) and feeling too inferior (powerless) to insist school has blanket enforcement / support, yet lacking authority to enforce them herself without whole school ethos backing it up. Position is weakened. Weakened power from above and below (SMLT and pupils).</p>	<p>Schools says teachers must enforce school rules, but this is not happening so much now, and is not supported day to day. On paper the school has strict 'learning environment' rules, but in practice they are not being followed.</p> <p>Pg 7 Pupils need to know what a pass grade is. During times of change, the HOD makes a call. They pretend they know, and they hope they are right, but they don't. They assume the role of expert, because an expert is needed. 'I walk around the corridors...</p> <p>I've got on with JL, because of the nature of how he is, because he won't write things down. If it were an oral exam, he'd fly it. Because he'd say 'You do this, Miss, you do that, you write that down, but now, with the new GCSE the questions are 4 and 5 marks. He can do a lot in his head, and on his calculator, but he's just writing the answer.</p>	<p>Pupil resistance – not following rules. See page 3 open defiance</p> <p>Can let some things go (can choose at what cost – which battles to fight – my words)</p> <p>Looks at jobs, considers applying – sees a way out. Chooses not to apply, chooses not to be rejected.</p> <p>Didn't get job at old school, but the new HOD struggled so was forced to support and resented it. Decided to leave. Doing it after being rejected was a turning point. She proved she was good enough and so applied elsewhere and got that job (her current one) instead.</p> <p>I think is a sort of characteristic of most teachers, that they like to feel in control, and I think this year I haven't felt in control because of external factors, really. And I would just like to have a period where I feel that I've got some answers...</p>	<p>P4 Weakest link – pupils looking is she one of the weak ones.</p> <p>Get wrist slapped (by link p5 manager) for not doing right targets (but no deadline set).</p> <p>P5 ...because I do think that I make a difference... and that's what keeps me going. However, it's getting le... the light is diminishing every year (half laughs) sort of thing. It's not... it's not as bright as it was, and I do wrestle with myself, as to whether it would be different in another school.</p> <p>A brilliant breath of fresh air, a massive pat on the back for me. Discussing a card given to her in first year of new job.</p> <p>when the new head came at Easter, she got us all together as a staff, very quickly, and talked about her vision, and that there would be transparency, and that there would be communication and ... erm.. some things are quite dated and she wanted to change thing. So, I went 'Yes!</p>

# Appendix D

There are a number of issues with this chapter, and the whole piece, and I know that this is just the start.

I think that there will be a 'standard plot' that runs through the data of all participants of what good school is based on the actors within it. There will also be the issue of these teachers talking to me as a co-teacher that understands this standard plot and that it therefore does not need to be explained. I do not know if I will write this up with the case studies being presented separately or if there will be themes that will be followed, and this has made it difficult to write. I have opted for a mix within this one, as it will open a discussion, but I imagine I will need to do this for each interview before I figure this out. It will also be easier when there is a methodology and a theory that states how this is being approached. For now, I get that this will not be what I aim for it to be, but a starting point that we can work from.

## **Stephanie Analysis**

Stephanie is a Head of Maths in a medium sized school in the North West of England. She has been teaching for 28 years and has been head of year and Head of department. She has been in her current school and role as HOD for 12 years and does not feel that she has had an opportunity for promotion at her school. This is a theme throughout her story.

## **Standard Plot**

Stephanie describes her setting against a back drop of what a standard plot is for teaching and learning. In this we have certain actors, which I will ascribe role of the 'good' or the 'bad' to give a sense of their role in the standard plot.

**The good teacher** cares about her pupils and wants to make a difference. The good teacher knows and understands the curriculum and the performance indicators, so that they can predict what percentage of pupils will pass at certain grades, and will be able to implement interventions to help pupils to improve and attain higher grades. The good teacher will form good relationships with her team and with her pupils in order to cajole and encourage. The good teacher will enforce school rules that 'set them up for life beyond school'. This means that manners and compliance are important. The teacher will ensure that pupils understand and follow these rules so that everyone in the classroom can learn. The good teacher will continue to train, attending meetings in other schools or courses where funded so that they are up to date with new initiatives.

**The good pupil** will wear their uniform correctly and they will follow instructions in the classroom. They will only leave the class with permission, so that they do not miss out on the teaching and fall behind. A good pupil will try to understand and ask questions. The good pupil does not need to have a high target or find the subject easy, but the pupil does need to try hard to understand and trust their teacher. A good pupil accepts that the



teacher has authority in the classroom, and will respect that the rules are there to benefit everyone. When the class follow the rules, more learning can take place.

**The good manager** will take care of her department. She will be able to guide her staff, and will make decisions such as which exam board to use, what grade boundaries to use (during times of change) and what interventions are necessary for which pupils. She will listen to her staff and spend time with them, putting their needs above the 'lists' of things to do. This good manager will help staff to feel confident enough to go for promotions and leave, training up the next replacement. She will support with academic and behavioural problems, offering advice or direct intervention where necessary. Her staff will feel nurtured, and supported by her.

**The good leader** will have applied for a role and have been chosen over others to it based on merit. They will still teach, and teach a range of classes, with different academic and behavioural challenges. The good leader will listen to staff when they have concerns and will not take criticism personally. A good leader will keep promises to listen and be objective and will help staff to be able to progress by offering opportunities to gain experience in new areas. The good leader will support staff to enforce school rules.

Variations to this do not necessary lead to 'the bad teacher, pupil, manager or leader'. She does not define these, except through highlighting what the better version of this might be. They are implicit, however. What is interesting in Stephanie's story is that she wants to believe that she was the good pupil, and is the good teacher and good manager, but as she

feels that her 'face does not fit' and has not been encouraged to apply for promotions (or had them given to her without application) she does not feel valued. She questions throughout the interview if she is good enough, and uses a crab bucket analogy for the pupils that she also applies to herself.

"the area that a lot of these children come from is a little bit like a crab bucket, and that there's the odd one or two trying to crawl out but as soon as they get to the top, somebody pulls them back in again and there's this element of 'you can't do better than their town, erm, and that erm everything is within that 3 mile radius erm.. and that aspiration needs to be much more. They don't aspire enough.

Not just for the pupils, but do you feel a bit like every time you get your head up, you ..."

There is a sense that the good teacher will be promoted. This lack of promotion seems to be a leitmotif to her story. Although not said explicitly she seems to be saying 'I thought I was a good teacher, I thought the results were good, I thought I was making a difference, but if this is not noticed, if this is not valued, am I mistaken?' Here we get Stephanie noticing and discussing her lack of confidence. She says it out loud, in different ways, the first, the most emotive, perhaps through the use of my name and the way that she looked at me.

"There are times when I actually don't think that I'm that good, Claire". (*use of my names feels important here*).

(In a conversation beyond the interview I would have responded in a different way, I would have reassured, but in this scenario. I could not. I wonder if this is part of the reason that I found this interview difficult: I was on the outside and whilst I could not only understand the standard plot, but had also been a part of it, so I could be allowed to enter in, this meant that I also had to sit outside of it, and note that I am not a fellow teacher, I am in this capacity a researcher and that I cannot support. This is something that I will return to, as this reassurance is something I do not witness apart from noticing my inability to do so. Is this also a part of the standard plot?) I will find a place for this.

This is where we start to see differences in Stephanie's 'as if' figured world of her school environment, and that of the standard plot. We meet different actors within this world that she discusses and compared herself against. It is tempting to write her definition of 'the good school', based on her descriptions of the actors within it, but it would be made up of the people described as good above. Furthermore, there is a sense that her school, her figured world deviates from her standard plot and perhaps is not the good school. There are moments within the interview, where she seems to wonder if this exists, as she states:

"I do think that I make a difference... and that's what keeps me going. However, it's getting le... the light is diminishing every year (half laughs) sort of thing. It's not... it's not as bright as it was, and I do wrestle with myself, as to whether it would be different in another school."

She also refers to issues with external pressures:

“You know it doesn’t feel great, because there’s an awful lot of internal pressure, but there’s still a massive external pressure: changing the GCSE; erm, the 1-9 grading, you know? Kids are sitting examinations that we don’t even know what a pass is going to be. All those kind of erm... unknowns....”

Here we see that performativity is a part of her standard plot. That the changing curriculum and examinations have an impact on the teacher and that these pressures are for others. We see that she is looking at her school setting and at new initiatives and is uncertain of her place in it, but that she understands that she is questioning her place in the larger picture, as well as in her setting. One example of this is at the very start of the interview when I ask her how being a teacher feels at the moment.

“I think you’ve got me just at a time, sort of just coming up to the summer holidays where I think if you spoke to anybody then they would say they’re feeling sort of low, because it’s been quite a difficult year. But I feel particularly low at the moment. I feel quite frustrated and I feel as though there’s an awful lot on my shoulders as a Head of Department (HOD) and particularly as a head of Maths. I think we’ve always had, I’ve always wanted the results to be good for the kids, but there’s more pressure now that it’s for the school and ... less more for the children, much more for how the school looks.”

In order to look at Stephanie as a case study, I have broken down her interview into themes. There is her understanding of what being a teacher means, including accepted norms, and the differences, perhaps tension of her school setting. I will refer to these as 'the standard plot' and her 'as if' figured world. Within these there are actors. There are the figurative actors mentioned within her standard plot, and more specific ones who are named. Within this there is Stephanie's identity as a teacher, HOD and as a potential leader, as she tells her story of being an actor within her figured world and the standard plot. The performative discourse runs throughout her piece, and is integral to the storying of being a teacher for Stephanie. How she tells this story shows themes of resistance, to the identity that she is struggling with, due to her position within the school, or her sense of positionality as a middle leader whose 'face does not fit'. There is also resistance to who she is choosing to be. Therefore, the themes of agency and fabrication relate not only to her story, but that of the actors around her. This makes her story complex, and some of her metaphors, but in particular her 'crab bucket' analogy clarify how she feels and that her story is of being in an environment where it takes strength and courage to try to climb out of the bucket, but a different type of courage to jump out once you reach the top.

Initially I thought that this story was a sad one, and that there were few moments where she finds the 'interstices to be the teacher she wants to be' through moving away from the performative discourse, but this does not hold true on closer inspection. Stephanie's story is one of persistence and resistance. She is motivated by 'making a difference' and throughout the interview, the stories she tells of her impact on others are of making this

difference, in the way that her maths teacher did for her. Her story is of doing this for others, and clinging onto the few occasions she mentions when someone does it for her. These seem to be the moments that she is willing to slip back into the bucket. She is happy to be there when she is appreciated but when she feels she is not, she starts the journey again...

There have been one SMLT role internally advertised which she felt she had the skill set and qualifications for but lacked specific experience, so did not apply and there have been SMLT roles that were not advertised so that she could not apply.

# Appendix E

C: so what is it that makes a challenging pupil feel ... so difficult to overcome? Is it...?

S: **Okay, okay**, so as soon as they're walking down the corridor uniform is not correct in some kind of way, and that..that's much more obvious, okay? So, whereas before it was isolated to trainers, the odd earrings, there's piercings, there's trainers and and a number of children without ties, **and I mean a considerably number without ties**, yes, blazers, hoodies, all that kind of thing. So, they're walking along not dressed properly, so you know, it's like, **what do you pick up on, because you know, that boy's got a hat on (laughing a little)** and trainers, and all those different things. Erm, a significant number of them chewing before they get into the room,... erm... so when you get them in the room.. erm you've got a significant number without basic equipment ... **okay... and how to deal with that... and then you've got ... erm... shouting across the classroom whilst you're talking... You've got erm, a familiarity of calling me mate**, is a... is a big one at the moment in a certain year group. So 'Can you write the date and title for me, please' 'Er nah mate, I won't be doing that'. And so then **you've got 25 children looking at you as to how you're going to respond** to that, sort of thing. Erm.. and you've got children that just get up and walk out of the classroom and go to the toilet, go and get water when they feel like it and then come back and then go 'Erm... erm.. I don't know what you're doing'. And I'm like 'Well no, because I carried on my lesson and then they go 'you never help me' **and then again, all the time you've got a significant number of children watching you to see how you will respond to this...** and sometimes I **don't respond** and that annoys me and it frustrates me... and I feel as though I **should respond** to it...

C: but this sounds as if it's not a specific pupil

S: no...no... no

C: This is a strength in number

S: yes yes, very much so, yes.

C: and these are still school rules, aren't they? Chewing... school uniform... I's not that...

S: yes they are school rules yes, absolutely.

C: because if you're in a school without a uniform, and they come in and they're wearing a hoody, that's okay.

S: no, that's right, yeah. No, we've still got school rules about school uniform. **There's still**

**an expectation** that form tutors check them and check equipment and the beginning of the day and the basics in a pen, pencil and a ruler, and **there's still a rule** about not chewing, and that mobile phones are confiscated, so again... erm... you know, there're... there're certain

children that will get their mobile phone at while you're teaching and then... and ... and ... and there has been, not in my class, but I know in other classrooms, they've actually started

having a phone conversation while the teacher has been teaching... and then it's... 'Can you hand you're phone over?' 'Nah you're not having my phone' **and this duh duh duh bat...**

**batting from one to the other again, again I keep repeating myself, but it's this people**

**looking to see how you're going to respond, because if they're looking for this chink of weakness... is she... is she one of the weak ones? And children pick up on this. Is she going to do something about it, or is that something else we can get her on later on, kind of thing.**

C: So, you've got school rules, that are ...

S: blatantly being broken...

C: but.. but you are required to follow

S: yep (and speaks over saying yep several times as I speak

C: in order to job your job properly, so if you've got... if senior management were to walk in, you would be judged on this?

S: yeah. Absolutely, yeah.

C: so, it's not that you can reset your school rules?

S: no

C: It's still clear that you still have to do everything

S: still agreeing yeah, yeah

C: and then on the other side of it, you're not just at fear of somebody that might judge you **as a teacher, you're feeling that you've got pupil.. children, watching you?**

S: yeah, to see how I might react to a situation.

C: So, you are viewed from all sides?

S: yeah. And... and... and quite happily, quite happily, if I was to get into an argument,

although I try very hard not to, if I was to get into an argument, you see, and it does sound

we are still asked

I am still ask to respond

she needs to respond in class or to herself? inner voice = what does she think? but there is more.

is this a need to respond? or is this a not yet? I am not weak?

no issue with rules came up here - yes, rules, no criticism

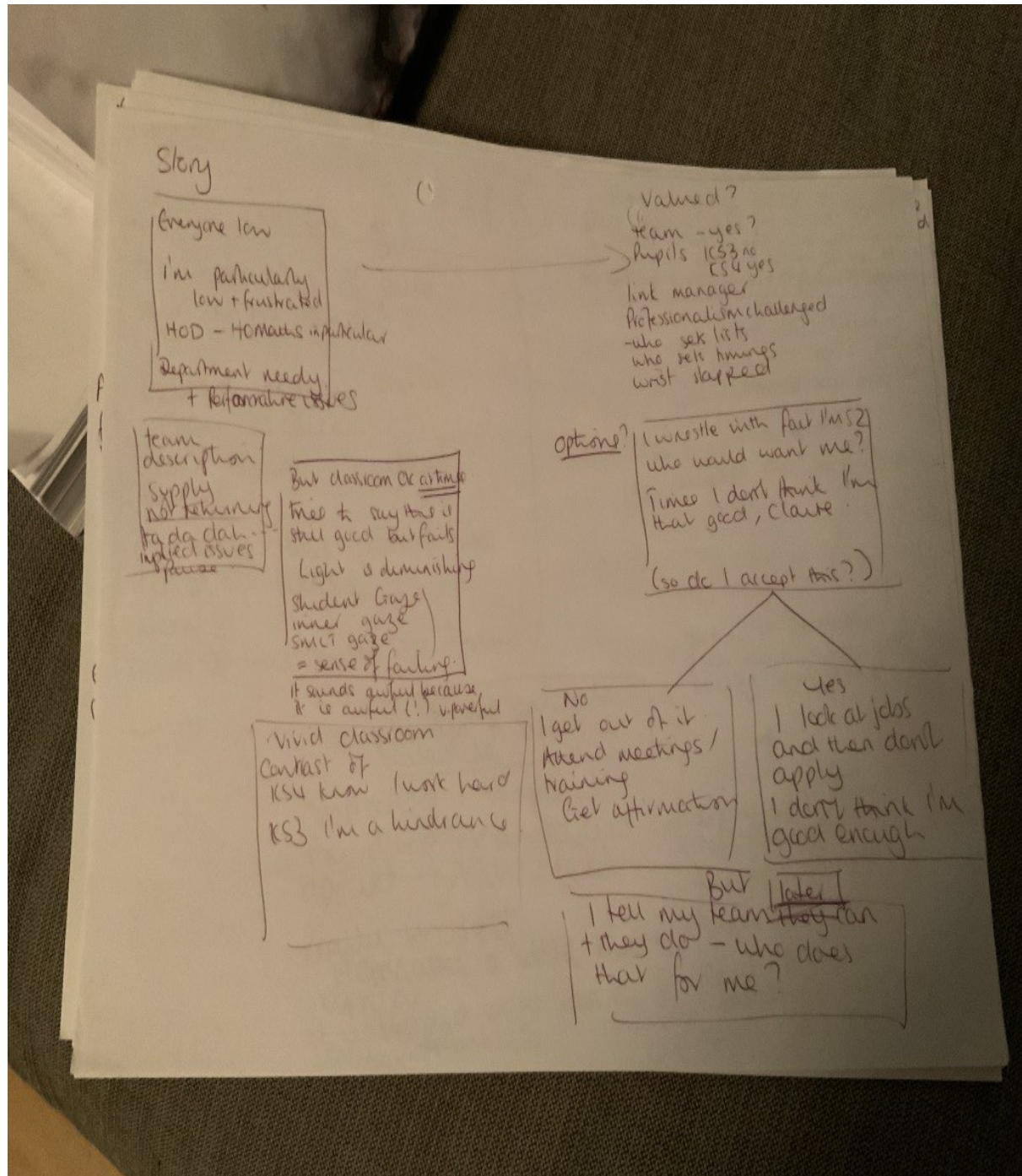
is this their question or hers? she needs to respond as not weak but this creates conflict.



awful, because it is awful, a row of smiling faces as they sit there grinning that you've been  
sucked into this argument, and this confrontation, that they're quite happy for, to have with  
you.

It is awful for her  
but seems to please children  
awful  
vs  
happy

# Appendix F



# Appendix G

Points where she uses my name

S: They... I ... I ... stop them doing what they want to do: which is chatting, messing around; drinking Lucozade, being on their phones. So I don't know what happens betwe... but something over the last few years, **Claire**, I seem to work a lot better with older children.

S: but... the classroom, it still works for me at times and erm... and when you think about it, **Claire**, I've been, this is my twenty-eighth year, and I have had opportunities to go up the ladder and to get... and the bit that I don't want to lose is in the classroom, because I do think that I make a difference... and that's what keeps me going. However, it's getting le... the light is diminishing every year (half laughs) sort of thing. It's not... it's not as bright as it was, and I do wrestle with myself, as to whether it would be different in another school... erm and erm... and whether it is something to do with the environment that I'm in now... erm, but I, I do wrestle with the fact that I'm fifty two now, and erm... who would employ me.....? and also, I do think at times that... erm... the environment that I've been in, that it has been quite negative and quite draining... there are times when I actually don't think that I'm that good, **Claire**.

S: I can't remember any one since then, **Claire**. You know, cards, or comments along those lines.

C: Five times:

S: yeah, five times. Once every half term.

We've had to predict, so if you were in my year 11 class, **Claire**, I would have to.. have to predict what I think you're going to get in the summer.

C: So, what happens if I'm in your class and I don't show progression?

S: But, erm, but if I was predicting what you were going to get and this is the conversation that I've had. If I think that you're going to get a five... then that's not going to change is it? Because that's what I think that you're going to get. You currently might be on a two, **Claire**, but if all I'm putting in is that I think you're going to get a five... it just stays at at ... at a five, doesn't it? And actually, you can't tell whether there's any progress towards that five, because you're not putting anything in to show current. Where if you're a two in September and I predict you a five, and you're a three in November, and I predict you a five

...

C: mmmm

S: Then obviously what I'm doing with you, **Claire** it's working, isn't it?

C: laughter

# Appendix H

## The Crab Bucket appropriation

S: I think the nature of the children that we've got, one of the best things that we can do is get them ready for life beyond school, and I don't think that we do that because we allow them to not come to school; we allow them to arrive late; we allow them not to wear a uniform; we allow them to not care, not aspire. Erm it's a bit like, this is my Billy's, I better give him credit, he reckons that the area that a lot of these children come from is a little bit like a crab bucket, and that there's the odd one or two trying to crawl out but as soon as they get to the top, sombody pulls them back in again and there's this element of 'you can't do better than this town, you can't do better than the neighbouring town erm, and erm, that erm everything is within that 3 mile radius erm.. and that aspiration needs to be much more. They don't aspire enough.

C: Try teaching French to them! Laughter

S: I know, If I don't aspire to be outside of the bucket, why would I speak to people in a different language?

C: but you understand that though.

S: yeah. I do.

C: Not just for the pupils, but do you feel a bit like every time you get your head up, you ..

S: yeah, I feel every time I get there sombody pulls me back in, sombody has a conversation with me or sombody gets wind I've looked at a job or that I'm thinking, you know there have been times, particularly when I had, before the old head left that I had about a month off, I was really quite ill, and I did actually think about just erm, giving in teaching. But if we go back to what we talked about when you went to America, it's the love of the job, and I'm not sure I could do anything else. And again, it's this, erm, I'm quite confident in a classroom, and I can, though actually I'm quite insecure at times, and I'm not sure if I could do anything else. I'm sure I could, but I don't feel as though, at the moment, just the way I am feeling, I don't as though I've got the confidence to take that plunge.

she is just like the pupils who are too scared to leave except she does aspire - being overlooked & affecting her confidence. she doesn't like saying she lacks confidence & leave.

we she is part of the problem

repeats bucket + aspiration.

Does she want out?

moment of appropriation - she runs with it - this is important

# Appendix I

face fits = appropriate, resist reject BUT  
 Jas happy to reject but still do what works - for diff reasons or leave.  
 Steph needs to be accepted. Sarah that's what people do.  
 Standard Plot of school. + POSITION

Hard Won Stand Points  
 Jas - Artist + Teacher  
 Sarah - To fit in  
 Steph - To be seen as leadership  
 In the face of reform? counter agency?)  
 Doing what I believe in.

Make A Difference  
 Steph + Jas - in classroom  
 Sarah - teaching how to be successful/fit it.  
 History In Person KEY to how to make a Diff  
 Steph - have a go - support.  
 Jas follow dreams - Passion  
 Sarah Chameleon - learn Standard Plot  
 HIP also leads to IPD - how is authorial discourse interacted with.

Authorial stance  
 Jas Artist in school. Not as leader - doesn't want to be  
 She sold Art in interview - sold herself as an artist + physically showed what she could do. She Performativity.

Pupil behaviour/expectations/relationships  
 - Steph longs for it.  
 - Sarah has it.  
 - Jas - reacts to it.

Opportunities

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 Pg 82  
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 Toots  
 ① How does T describe lived experience after Teachers' Soul  
 ② How do teachers develop Professional IDs at interface of potentially competing personal + professional discourses  
 ③ where along margins + interstices of the performative discourse, how + with what difficulties, do teachers choose to act  
 ④ In what ways do teachers describe how performative discourses + practices position them, and do they also provide teachers with the resources to respond?

of being a teacher 15 yrs  
 as happy to but still do work - for or leave. Steph needs Sarah the  
 Hard u Stand  
 in the face of counter a  
 Make Differ  
 welfare vs buying in autnoral  
 Author stanc  
 Pupil behavi  
 expectatio  
 relat  
 Opport

what I believe  
 Career  
 ID  
 Hard won  
 Standpoint  
 Behavior  
 Relationship  
 Belief  
 Moral  
 difference  
 ID +  
 AF  
 Career  
 Agency  
 Face it  
 Authorial Stance  
 Opportunity  
 Agency  
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# Appendix K

46	"identity cannot be seen as a fixed 'thing'"	For teachers this is mediated by their own experience in schools and outside of schools as well as their own beliefs and values about what it means to be a teacher and the type of teacher they aspire to <i>be</i>	(Sachs, 2001: 154)
	Combining aspects from personal and professional	"their identities are made up of a combination of aspects from their personal and professional selves that are continually constructed and reconstructed in response to a variety of ever-changing influences"	( <i>Towers and Maguire, 2017: 949</i> )
		The reasons cited for becoming a teacher seem largely altruistic – wanting to 'make a difference', wanting to work with young people and love of their subject. The reasons for leaving or for thinking of leaving were workload and work/life balance as well as target driven culture and government initiatives	( <i>Perryman and Calvert, 2019: 2</i> )
	Teacher agency	"agency that occurs specifically in the professional working practices of teachers"	(Priestley et al., 2015: 20)
	Past present future	there are three dimensions to teacher agency, which are the past (the iterative dimension); the future (the projective dimension) and the present (the practical evaluative dimension)	(Priestley et al., 2015: 17; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 962)
	Agency comes from resources available to them.	Priestley et al. argue that teachers bring their life and professional histories as well as their short and long term aspirations to the environment in which they work. Their roles and relationships, the resources available to them, their values and beliefs and the discourses in this working environment affect their capacity for agency so that "it is the interaction between capacities	(Priestley et al., 2015: 3)

		and conditions that count in making sense of teacher agency”	
	Accountability limits agency	Referring directly to performativity, they argue that even when teachers and schools are offered autonomy to make decisions, the high level of accountability measures in place limits teachers’ capacity for agency, or at least the agency to act differently	(Priestley et al., 2015: 111)
	Caged bird	“If a bird has been in a cage for a decade and suddenly finds the door open, it should not be surprising if the bird does not wish to leave”	(Eisner, 1992: 617; Priestley et al., 2015: 126)
	Counter Agency	the public service worker, such as the teacher, brings their own agency to the “moment” of policy delivery, using their “individual, context-specific and emotionally and morally charged assessment”	(Prior, 2009: 22)
50	3 counter agencies	three different types of agency which are revision, resistance and refusal. Revision is where actions are revised in order to produce the required outcomes and refusal is when one refuses to become engaged. Resistance is described as an active form of agency and Prior’s example is how prisoners seemingly accept their “subject roles constructed for them while developing covert personal strategies for survival and eventual release”	(Prior, 2009: 31)
50		Counter agency can mean the appearance of conforming, but for a limited period of time, or a way to hide how teachers revise or reject policy. Staying in the cage does not necessarily mean choosing to be a prisoner, and appearing to conform does not necessarily mean conformity.	me
50		Teacher identity and agency are weaved with and into the performative discourse. Therefore, if teachers’ professional identities and their ability to make choices are made with a lived	me



		experience of this discourse, then they can respond to it on an individual and personal level, making revisions here, rejections there and resisting certain elements whilst also embracing others.	
51	5 <sup>th</sup> age	Hargreaves writing in the British version of this book, discusses how we have now entered the age of “identity, engagement and well-being” and that there is a need to respond to the “global epidemic of mental health problems among young people”	(Hargreaves, 2018: 164)
51-52	wellbeing	we need to flip the system back to a place where children are placed in the centre of “a human system of learning, development and care” and that there is a need to also address teacher well-being and work-life balance	(Hargreaves, 2018: 167)
52	Spaces to invent or contrive new ways of saying the truth	a way to consider how we might “subvert the new games of truth within which we are re-worked” and that “spaces remain in which we might invent or contrive new ways of saying the truth”	(Ball, 2013b: 142)
52	Constantly interrupt ourselves and complex	Ball argues that the reading of Foucault in Education Studies stresses the “impossibility of freeing oneself from power relations” but that in Foucault’s later work “subjectivity, ethics, resistance and freedom are interwoven in complex and multi-layered ways” so that we constantly interrupt ourselves to understand the way that we are governed in order to be able to act differently	(Ball, 2013b: 146)